DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 136 CS 504 861

TITLE Crime and Violence in the Media. Hearing before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary. House of Representatives, Ninety-Eighth Congress, First Session. Serial No. 83.
INSTITUTION Congress of the U.S., Washington, D.C. House Committee on the Judiciary.
PUB DATE 13 Apr 83
NOTE 309p.; Document contains small print.
PUB TYPE Legal/Legislative/Regulatory Materials (090)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavioral Science Research; Crime; Federal Government; *Hearings; Mass Media; *Mass Media Effects; Psychological Patterns; Social Problems; *Television; *Television Research; Television Viewing; *Violence
IDENTIFIERS *Audience Response; Committee on the Judiciary; House of Representatives; National Institute of Mental Health

ABSTRACT

Testimony from a senate subcommittee inquiry into the effects on society of crime and violence in the media and what role, if any, it may play in subsequent criminal activity is contained in these proceedings. The testimony presented focuses on recent reports on television and related issues--in particular, a 1982 study published by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), to the effect that many heavy viewers are influenced toward aggressive behavior and others are influenced toward fear and apprehension or other behaviors more subtle than aggression. The proceedings contain transcripts of oral testimony as well as related written materials from the following speakers: Daniel Shorr, senior correspondent of the Cable News Network; David Pearl, chief of the Behavioral Sciences Research Branch, NIMH; Thomas Cook, professor of psychology at Northwestern University; Linda Lichter, of the graduate program in science, technology, and public policy at George Washington University; Leonard Eron, professor of psychology and research professor of the social sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago; Ronald Milavsky, vice-president of news and social research of NBC; Alan Wurtzel, director of news, developmental, and social research of ABC; and Philip Harding, director of special projects research of the CBS/Broadcast Group. Additional materials included with the testimony include letters from George Gerbner, professor of communications at the University of Pennsylvania; John P. Murray, director of youth and family policy at Boys Town; and David Pearl; as well as copies of a newspaper column by Daniel Schorr and a report on television and behavior prepared by NIMH. (HTH)

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ED257136

CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-EIGHTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

APRIL 13, 1983

Serial No. 83

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
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CRIME AND VIOLENCE IN THE MEDIA

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 13, 1983

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 9:35 a.m., in room 2237, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William J. Hughes (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Hughes, Morrison, Smith of Florida, Sawyer, Sensenbrenner, and Shaw.

Staff present: Hayden Gregory, chief counsel; Edward O'Connell, assistant counsel; and Charlene Vanlier, associate counsel.

Mr. HUGHES. The Subcommittee on Crime will come to order.

The Chair has received a request to cover this hearing in whole or in part by television broadcast, radio broadcast, still photography, or by other similar methods. In accordance with committee rule 5(a), permission will be granted unless there is objection. Is there objection? The gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Reserving the right to object, Mr. Chairman, I assume there is going to be no violence today at this hearing.

Mr. HUGHES. We are working under that assumption.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Then I withdraw my reservation. [Laughter.]

Mr. HUGHES. Hearing no objection, such coverage will be permitted.

This morning we begin an inquiry into crime and violence in the media and its overall effect on our society, particularly what role, if any, it may play in subsequent criminal activity. Because of the breadth of this issue, this morning we will be concentrating on the nature and scope of the problem rather than any legal remedies with their first amendment ramifications.

In today's hearing we will further concentrate our attention on television and recent reports on this and related issues. We will be particularly interested in an extensive study published by the National Institute of Mental Health in 1982 entitled "Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implication for the Eighties."

This NIMH report is itself a followup to a 1972 report of the Surgeon General which linked violence on TV and aggressive behavior in children. We will have extensive discussions on the NIMH report during this hearing, but there is one particular part of the report which I would like to quote at this juncture. It says:

> Research evidence accumulated during the past decade suggests that the viewer learns more than aggressive behavior from televised violence. The viewer learns to be a victim and to identify with victims. As a result, many heavy viewers may exhibit fear and apprehension, while other heavy viewers may be influenced toward aggressive behavior. Thus, the effects of televised violence may be even more extensive than suggested by earlier studies, and they may be exhibited in more subtle forms of behavior than aggression.

We will delve in depth into these assertions in this and subsequent hearings. In our initial phase today we will deal with these issues from strikingly different views. One thing, however, I think we can all agree upon is that the media, in general, and particularly TV, is pervasive in our life.

As the report states:

> Extending over all other findings is the fact that television is so large a part of our daily life. Within American society, television is now a universal phenomenon. About half the present population never knew a world without it. Television is, in short, an American institution. It has changed or influenced most other institutions, from the family to the functioning of the Government.

As a public official, I am acutely aware of this, but I must also state that other parts of the media have similar effects. In this regard, I am reminded of a story of a British Member of Parliament who had read an insulting editorial about himself published in Lord Beaverbrook's newspaper, the Daily Express. A few days later he met Beaverbrook in the men's room of a London club.

"Dear fellow," said Beaverbrook as he rinsed his hands, "I've been thinking things over and I feel that the editorial was unjustified. I apologize." The Member of Parliament replied, "Beaverbrook, I accept your apology. But next time why don't you insult me in the men's room and then apologize in the newspaper."

This vignette emphasizes that a sense of timing also can be a crucial element in any consideration of media exposure.

With this in mind, I will conclude my statement, except to say that I look forward to hearing the testimony this morning.

At this time I recognize the most distinguished ranking Republican on the subcommittee, Hal Sawyer of Michigan.

Mr. **Sawyer**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to commend the chairman for this hearing. I think it is an interesting one. It is a little extracurricular. It is beyond the scope of the bills we may have before us and is designed really to give the subcommittee a kind of a better feel for what is going on out there in the world of crime.

I was just telling the chairman, I hope we veer off some of these more passive things and get into some organized crime hearings. I have been kind of looking forward to seeing some of these New Jersey and New York people. [Laughter.]

I may just say in the opening that this has been a real question. Of course, all of us have listened to opinions pro and con on whether, in effect, violent behavior on television rubs off on youngsters or whether the terror involved rubs off on potential victims.

I may just say that I have kind of a tentative view of this, but before I say that, I may say that I have changed my views as a result of hearings on many other subjects here, that as I listened to people who knew more about the subject than I, their discussions were persuasive and I changed my point of view. But I go in kind of tentatively with a doubt in my mind that violence on television, in effect, rubs off on people that wouldn't have been violent anyway.

On the other hand, I do feel that the coverage given to violent crime, at least in some instances, I believe, tends to spawn it. I know some years ago, about three Congresses ago, I was on the Special Committee investigating the assassinations of Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy, and we had James Earl Ray, the assassin, before us and questioned him at some considerable length down at Brushy Mountain. I became absolutely convinced that the seeking of the publicity was a major motivation in that situation. With a twisted point of view, I think, the gentleman felt that he would become kind of a hero in the South and after a rather short slap on the wrist from a southern jury would become a national hero and make hundreds of thousands of dollars giving interviews and writing books. Really, if you would have listened to that total testimony, there was little question that, albeit the product of a warped point of view, was a point of view that was primarily aimed at the media. I am sure that happens in many other cases, or at least at this point in time.

I want to again congratulate the chairman for this series of hearings and I welcome the witnesses today and really look forward to hearing their more informed points of view on the subjects we have been talking about.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUGHES. The gentleman from Wisconsin.

Mr. SENSENBRENNER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I, too, would like to salute the Chairman for calling these hearings today and to express one concern of mine.

The news coverage, for either acts perpetrated by deliberate terrorists or by people who are mentally derranged, sometimes encourage these people to commit very gruesome acts, such as kidnapings, murders, attempts to blow up the Washington Monument, and the like. I think there is ample evidence that in many instances, both in this country and overseas, when someone does get involved in the perpetration of this kind of a crime, the first question they ask of the authorities is "Is it on TV" and "I would like to see what the news clips are." That may very well act as an incentive for someone to commit such a crime, simply because they know they would become an instant celebrity as a result of getting involved in this kind of criminal activity.

I certainly don't advocate the passage of any legislation to put a stop to this, but I would like to ask our television representatives whether there is introspection going on in television news departments on this issue, and that perhaps a blackout for a period of time would certainly act as a deterrent to future crimes of this sort where other people are thinking of committing them and seeing what some of their conferrers are doing when they attempt to kidnap someone, or hold people hostage, or blow up a national monument.

I thank the chairman for recognizing me and I yield back my time.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you.

I might say to the members of the committee that it doesn't look as if we needed that waiver for television broadcast this morning.

For some reason, we do not appear to have any coverage from that part of the media.

I just want to say, before we bring our first witness up, that the subcommittee has a number of strictly legislative initiatives that we have undertaken and will in the future. I remember last year there were about a dozen bills, about five of which sunk with the veto of the omnibus crime bill, H.R. 3963. Last year, intertwined, almost like a Scheherazade theme, we also weaved in a lot of hearings dealing with unemployment and crime, drug abuse and crime, because one of the other principal areas of jurisdiction of this subcommittee is the area of crime prevention. I think this hearing today is a natural follow-up on that series of hearings.

I might also say to my colleague from Michigan that, like Michigan, most of our crime in New Jersey is disorganized crime, not organized crime.

Our first witness this morning is Daniel Schorr. Mr. Schorr was born in New York and attended New York City schools and the College of the City of New York. He served as an Army intelligence sergeant during World War II and in 1948 began his distinguished journalistic career with the Christian Science Monitor and later joined the New York Times for assignments in The Netherlands, Belgium, and other West European countries.

In 1953 he began a long career with CBS, which ended in 1976. From 1976 to 1979 he was a regent's professor at the University of California at Berkeley. He also has broadcasted commentaries for the National Public Radio and wrote a book, "Clearing the Air." In 1980 he became senior correspondent for the Cable News Network.

He has had a most distinguished journalistic career, and on behalf of the Subcommittee on Crime, Mr. Schorr, we welcome you here this morning.

We have a copy of your prepared statement which, without objection, will be made a part of the record, and you may proceed as you see fit. Welcome.

STATEMENT OF DANIEL SCHORR, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, CABLE NEWS NETWORK

Mr. Schorr. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Some of the opening comments anticipated what I had to say and leave me with less to say. The basic issues I wanted to raise have already been partly raised.

Let me mention in passing that I come here with some trepidation because one of the last times I appeared before a House committee it was with every prospect of going to jail myself. That was the House Ethics Committee in 1976 and it involved a matter of the first amendment and disclosure of sources. I feel much more comfortable before this committee, except to say that I have also thought about whether reporters, in general, should spend much of their time testifying before congressional committees. I think we have our separate functions in our constitutional scheme of things, and it is only because I think, in addition to being a reporter, I am also a citizen with certain responsibilities that I am very happy to appear before your committee.

You will be hearing on the general subject of television and violence from people much more qualified than I to talk about it. I am going to talk about a collateral matter, not about violence in television entertainment, but about my part of television, my world, the part of reality television as it is called, the part that has to do with news and documentaries and actuality, because I think my part of television also sets up some perverse incentives to violence.

A most dramatic case in point is John W. Hinckley, Jr., addicted previously to movie and television violence. On March 30, 1981, he set out to crash the media hall of fame by what he called the historical act of shooting the President in the presence of video cameras. We know from having looked through records that his knowledge of the Kennedy assassination had taught him how television would respond; that is, by preempting all the programs listed in TV Guide, a copy of which he had left behind in his hotel room.

Hinckley's first question to Secret Service Agent Steven Colo, who was interrogating him that evening, was "Is it on TV?" finding himself transported to courtrooms in helicopters and police-escorted bullet-proof limousines, he wrote, "I feel like the President now, with my own retinue. We both wear bullet-proof vests now."

Now, Hinckley may be legally crazy, but he ain't stupid. Objectively, he in fact accomplished his purpose of establishing his identity in a most spectacular way. We must not underestimate the function of television today as the most pervasive arbiter of identity. Television is a target for those who want to find some way of achieving identify. What he did was to manipulate a medium that celebrates violence to become himself a media celebrity. Anybody who can make Dan Rather and Frank Reynolds come to work in the afternoon has to be a very important person. [Laughter.]

The video tape that recorded his act since that time has been played and replayed countless times, at normal speed and at slow motion, stop action, almost like watching a spectator sport event, with hypnotic effect on other potential Hinckleys. At the very least it tends to lower the threshold of shock for those who have to watch that act.

Indeed, Hinckley himself told Agent Colo, when advised that his attempt on President Reagan's life was all over the networks, he said "That's too bad, because it's going to affect other people." That was the other side of Hinckley who could see these things.

Marshall McLuhan wrote, in 1977:

> Violence is one of the manifestations of the quest for identity. When you have lost your identity, you become a violent person looking for identity.

It is in television today that one looks for it. Increasingly, the media have become a target of that search for identity and it manifests itself in many ways.

I have some examples here that I will go through very rapidly, because you have my testimony. Reg Murphy, when he was editor of the Atlanta Constitution, was kidnapped, and, he reported later his abductors immediately went to an apartment and turned on the TV to see whether the kidnaping had gotten on the evening news. Or the prison rioters in Attica, NY, whose primary demand was that their grievances had to be aired on television. Another incident of that kind was recently in a Brooklyn hospital where a prisoner took hostages and demanded to see a newspaper reporter, radio coverage, and appearance on WABC's "Eyewitness News," and a radio and TV set in order to be able to enjoy all of those appearances.

I will skip some other incidents, which you will find in my testimony, and come to the Washington Monument siege last December, which was clearly staged as a media event. Norman Mayer made clear at the outset that he didn't want to talk to the police; he wanted to talk to the media. He had a lot of unfocussed demands for an end to nuclear war, but the most concrete demand was that 51 percent of TV time be devoted to a dialog on the nuclear peril. When he was not walking around the monument, he was apparently spending part of his time in his van watching the daylong coverage on his TV set. Maybe it wasn't just coincidental that it was precisely at 7:30 p.m., as the network news ended, that he got into his van and began to move in some direction, for some reason that we shall never know.

Organized terrorists have also learned that television is an easy prey, or can be bent to their will. The recent NBC movie, "Special Bulletin," which has become controversial in itself, may have exaggerated the point it wanted to make, of reciprocal manipulation between terror and television, but let's go to reality, as we like to call it, to provide its own evidence.

When the radical Baader-Meinhof Gang in West Germany kidnapped a politician in 1975, as a hostage for the release of five imprisoned comrades, the group forced German television to show each prisoner boarding a plane and to broadcast dictated propaganda statements.

When Arab terrorists seized the headquarters of OPEC in 1975, killing three persons and taking oil ministers hostage, their plans called for their occupying the building until the TV cameras arrived.

Similarly, when the so-called Symbionese Liberation Army in San Francisco kidnaped Patty Hearst. And then, to come back to Washington, the Hanafi Muslims' hostage-taking occupation of three locations here in 1976, that was a classic case of media-age terrorism. Their leader, Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, spent much of his time giving telephone interviews while his wife checked on what was being broadcast. Police expressed fear that TV cameras would give away their deployment.

One of the three ambassadors of the Moslem countries who negotiated the end of the occupation later told me that the ambassador's central fear was that media interviews on the telephone might stimulate the terrorists to violence against their victims.

The former head of the State Department's Office for Combating Terrorism, Anthony Quainton, with whom I talked, associates the increase in casualties during hijackings and hostage takings with a desire to insure media attention. Deliberate acts of terror, like the tossing out of slain victims, are planned as media events.

There is kind of a symbiotic relationship between violence and television, and it comes as the climax to an era in which our medium, my medium, unintentionally but nonetheless systematically has managed to select the most dramatic, encouraged demonstrative and the aggressive, and finally, to encourage violent behavior.

My own experience—if this seems like a form of true confessions, so be it. My own experience covering urban unrest for CBS during the 1960's was that threatening rhetoric tended to overpower moderate rhetoric, because it was regarded as more newsworthy, simply more interesting.

When the Reverend Martin Luther King came to Washington in 1968 to discuss plans for the Poor People's March, which he did not live to lead, I was one of the reporters who encouraged him, by persistent questioning, to allude to the possibilities for disruption of traffic in Washington over the bridges and other various menacing possibilities—it's a way of getting the story on the air.

I have no doubt that television journalists, myself among them, helped to build up the militants like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown within the black community by giving them preferred exposure over the more moderate, the "less-newsworthy" black leaders.

I recall that, at a community meeting in Watts, Los Angeles in 1965, after the first night of rioting, most of the speakers appealed for calm. One teenager seized the microphone and demanded that "we go after the whiteys." This was the "sound bite" featured on the local TV news programs in Los Angeles that night. Later, a moderate black commented, "Look to me like the white man want us to riot." Another one said, "If that's the way they read it, that's the way we'll write the book." I have no doubt that was a factor in what followed in the riots in Watts.

Television offers incentives not only to destructive behavior but, on occasion, to self-destructive behavior. I don't know how many remember Paddy Chayefsky's movie satire "Network," in which an anchorman announces on the air that he is going to commit suicide because he wants to improve his slipping ratings. Well, that was a movie and it might be exaggerated.

But in real life, as we still like to call it, in Sarasota, FL, in 1974, Chris Chubbuck, an anchorwoman whose ratings were slipping, announced on the air, "In keeping with channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts in living color, you are going to see another first—an attempt at suicide." The woman pulled a gun out of her shopping bag and shot herself in the head, fatally, on television. It improved her ratings, but I am afraid it didn't have any long-term benefits for her.

But there is another side to this that concerns me. I don't know how to put it. I wish you had some of the mental health experts who could help me with what I am trying to grope for. That is that television has had the effect of lowering the line between reality and unreality to a point where it is possible to do something without understanding that it is real and has real consequences. Even after years of seeing people get shot, and after the last commercial walkout of the studio, to finally lose a sense that there are real consequences to real acts because that line has been so blurred.

Cecil Andrews raised a painful question for television journalism last month when he set himself on fire in the town square of Jacksonville, AL, in the presence of a TV camera, to protest against unemployment in America. A lot of us in television have discussed at great length an ethical issue, whether the cameramen should have intervened earlier than they did to put out the fire.

Well, that is one question. There are other questions. Andrews called the local television station four times to say he was going to do this. Question: would he have done it if the news director had told him that under no condition would television cameras be sent? In fact, what happened was that the camera crew was delayed 70 minutes by car trouble and Andrews waited for the camera crew to arrive before he did set himself on fire.

Another question: Would we be less likely to have future incidents of that kind if the station had not then gone ahead and broadcast some of the video tape, which was really "socko" video tape, which they had exclusively?

In providing all these inducements to demonstrativeness, from handwaving to hijacking, from assassination to self-immolation, what hath television wrought and how do we get it under control?

Now, though I appear before a legislative subcommittee, you would not expect me to advocate legal remedies. My life has been spent trying to avoid legal actions in fields like this. What I hope is that forums like this subcommittee will help to stimulate self-examination in the news departments of television stations and networks.

In the wake of the 1968 riots during the Chicago Democratic Convention, the networks took a terrible beating in the public press and among the public. They responded with guidelines intended to avoid stimulating violence that might occur by the very presence of cameras.

Well, maybe it is time to have another and a broader look at a policy of self-restraint. Here are some of the issues—and let me tell you, I don't have the answers to the issues—but these are some of the issues:

First, should live coverage of terrorist episodes be restricted to the minimum necessary to report the news? I cannot agree to a blackout—I wish that Congressman Sensenbrenner was still here. I cannot agree to a blackout. I think blackouts are what you get on the other side of the Iron Curtain. They lead to a distrust of the news media to deliver the news. I think blackouts go too far. But I think self-restraint can go to covering what is necessary to report the news, without exploiting it, without getting into competition with other stations, without stationing people outside buildings where nothing is seen happening, just in order to say we have been on the air longer than the other station, or as one ABC station in New York recently said, in the case of a hostage situation, "Tune in to WABC, your hostage station."

Second, should direct contact with terrorists by telephone or by other means be avoided in order not to provide ego satisfaction and further stimulation?

Third, should the replaying of scenes of assassination attempts and other violence be limited to real requirements of news in order not to make such acts seem to be commonplace and inspire possible copycats?

Fourth, should news directors make conscious efforts to avoid emphasizing threatening and extreme utterances out of the context of more moderate rhetoric? That goes back to Watts.

Fifth is a tough question, and I would not give you an easy answer to this—should television executives refuse terrorist demands for air time, even when that is accompanied by threats against hostages? A really tough question.

We know that no television would like to hold itself responsible for the killing of a hostage, and yet you know that every time you give in to a demand, you know there will be further demands of that kind.

This is an uphill battle because violence, like walks in space and like flaming volcanoes, is made to order for television. Competitive pressures are heavy. There are very few kudos for young reporters and camera crews who come back to their stations and say they left the blood and guts to the other station.

I believe, however, that the public can provide incentives for another kind of competition than the current ratings race. I would like to see the reaction to the first station that announces, on the air, in the midst of some hostage situation, "We will report developments on this hostage situation as they occur, but we will not keep cameras posted there in order not to encourage these and other terrorists."

Thank you.

[The statement of Daniel Schorr follows:]

STATEMENT BY DANIEL SCHORR, SENIOR CORRESPONDENT, CABLE NEWS NETWORK [1]

Over the years a wealth of evidence has been accumulated suggesting that fantasy violence on television tends to encourage aggressive behavior. I would like to focus on an area less exhaustively researched—the way my own world of reality television—news, actuality, documentary—unwittingly sets up perverse incentives to violence.

A dramatic case in point is John Hinckley Jr., who, addicted to movie and television violence, set out on March 30, 1981, to crash the media hall of fame by the "historical deed" of shooting the President in the presence of the video cameras. His knowledge of the Kennedy assassinations had taught him how television would respond—by preempting all the programs listed in TV Guide, which he had left behind in his hotel room. Hinckley's first question to Secret Service Agent Steven Colo, interrogating him that evening, was, "Is it on TV?" Finding himself transported to courtrooms in helicopters and police-escorted bullet-proof limousines, he wrote, "I feel like the President now, with my own retinue. We both wear bullet-proof vests now."

Hinckley may be legally crazy, but he is not stupid. Objectively he accomplished his purpose of establishing his identity in the most spectacular manner—by manipulating a medium that celebrates violence to become a media celebrity. The video tape that recorded his act has, since then, been played and replayed countless times, at normal speed, slow motion and stop-action, with hypnotic effect on other potential Hinckleys. Indeed, Hinckley told Agent Colo, when advised that his attempt on President Reagan's life was all over the networks, "That's too bad because it's going to affect other people."

Marshall McLuhan wrote, in 1977, "Violence is one of the manifestations of the quest for identity. When you've lost your identity, you become a violence person looking for identity." Increasingly, the media have become a target of that search for identity that manifests itself in many ways.

In 1974, Reg Murphy, then editor of the Atlanta Constitution (more recently publisher of the Baltimore Sun) was kidnaped, and his abductors immediately sped to an apartment, turning on a TV set to see if their act had made the evening news.

In 1971, prison rioters in Attica, New York, listed as a primary demand that their grievances be aired on television. More recently, in October 1982, a prisoner in a Brooklyn hospital took six hostages, and demanded, in succession, a newspaper reporter, radio coverage and an appearance on WABC's Eyewitness News—and a radio and TV set so he could enjoy his appearances.

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[1] For identification only. The testimony is personal.

In 1977, in Indianapolis, Anthony George Kiritisis wired a sawed-off shotgun to the neck of a mortgage company officer, led him out in front of the police and TV cameras and yelled, "Get those goddam cameras on! I'm a goddam national hero!"

The Washington Monument siege last December was apparently staged as a media event. Norman Mayer made clear at the outset that it was the media, not the police he wanted to deal with. Of his various unfocussed demands for an end to nuclear war, the most concrete one was that 51 percent of TV time be devoted to a dialogue on the nuclear peril. When he was not walking around the monument, he was apparently spending part of his time in his van watching the day-long live coverage on his TV set. It was perhaps not coincidental that at 7:30 p.m., just as the network news ended, he began moving his van, for reasons that we shall never know.

Organized terrorists have also learned that television is easy prey, or can be bent to their will. The recent NBC movie, "Special Bulletin," may hve exaggerated its point of reciprocal manipulation between terror and television, but reality provides its own evidence.

When the radical Baader-Meinhof Gang in West Germany kidnapped a politician in 1975 as hostage for the release of five imprisoned comradesm it forced German television to show each prisoner boarding a plane and to broadcast dictated propaganda statements.

When Arab terrorists seized the Vienna headquarters of OPEC in 1975, killing three persons and taking oil ministers hostage, the terrorists' plans called for their occupying the building until the TV cameras arrived.

The so-called Symbionese Liberation Army, which kidnapped Patricia Hearst in San Francisco, had as a central feature of their plan, forcing radio and television to play its tapes and broadcast its messages.

The Hanafi Muslims' hostage-taking occupation of three locations in Washington in 1976 was a classic case of media-age terrorism. The leader, Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, spent much of his time giving telephone interviews while his wife checked on what was being broadcast. Police expressed fear that TV cameras would give away their deployment. One of the ambassadors of Moslem countries who negotiated the end of the occupation later told me that their central fear was that media interviews might stimulate the terrorists to violence against their victims.

Anthony Quainton, former head of the State Department's Office for Combating Terrorism, associates the increase in casualties during hijackings and hostage-takings with a desire to insure media attention. Deliberate acts of horror—like the tossing out of slain victims—are planned as media events.

The symbiotic relationship between violence and television comes as the climax to an era in which this medium, unintentionally but nonetheless systematically, has, by its process of selecting the most dramatic, encouraged demonstrative, aggressive and, finally, violent behavior.

My own experience, covering urban unrest for CBS during the 1960s, was that threatening rhetoric tended to overpower moderate rhetoric because it was regarded as more newsworthy. When the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Washington in 1968 to discuss plans for the "Poor People's March" that he did not live to lead", I was one of the reporters who encouraged him, by persistent questioning, to allude to possibilities for disruption of traffic and other menacing possibilities.

I have no doubt that television journalists (myself among them) helped to build up militants like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown within the Black community by giving them preferred exposure over the more moderate, less "newsworthy" leaders.

At a community meeting after the first night of rioting in the Watts area of Los Angeles in 1965, most of the speakers appealed for calm. One teen-ager seized the microphone and demanded "going after the whiteys." That was the "sound-bite" featured on the local TV news programs. A moderate commented, "Look to me like the white man wants us to riot." Another said, "If that's the way they read it, that's the way we'll write the book."

Television offers incentives not only to destructive behavior, but, on occasion, to self-destructive behavior. Some of you may remember Paddy Chayefsky's movie satire,"Network", in which an achor man announces, on the air, he will commit suicide to improve his slipping ratings. But in real life, as we still call it, in Sarasota, Fla., in 1974, Chris Chubbuck, an anchor woman with slipping ratings, announced on the air, "In keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts in living color, you're going to see another first—an attempt at suicide." Then she pulled a gun out of a shopping bag and shot herself fatally in the head.

Cecil Andrews raised a painful question for television journalism last month when he sets himself on fire in the town square of Jacksonville, Ala., in the presence of a television camera to protest against unemployment in America. The question discussed at great length is whether the cameramen should have intervened earlier than they did to put out the flames. But there are other questions. Andrews called the local television station four times to say he was going to do it. Would he have done it if the news director had told him no camera would be sent? In fact, the camera crew, delayed by car trouble, arrived 70 minutes late, and Andrews did not set himself afire until the camera was there. And would we be less likely to have future incidents of that kind if the station had not broadcast some of the video tape?

In providing all these inducements to demonstrativeness from hand-waving to hijacking, from assassination to self-immolation, what hath television wrought? And how do we get it under control?

Through I appear before a legislative committee, you would not expect me to advocate legal remedies. What I hope is that forums like this subcommittee will help to stimulate self-examination in television news departments.

In the wake of the 1968 riots during the Chicago Democratic convention, the networks took a terrible public beating, and responded with guidelines intended to avoid stimulating violence by the very presence of the cameras. It is time to have another and broader look at policies of self-restraint, with these as some of the issues:

1. Should live coverage of terrorist episodes be restricted to the minimum necessary to report the news?
2. Should direct contact with terrorists, by telephone or by other means, be avoided in order not to provide ego-satisfaction and stimulation?
3. Should the replaying of scenes of assassination and other violence be limited to real news requirements in order not to make such acts seem commonplace and inspire possible copycats?
4. Should news directors make conscious efforts to avoid emphasizing threatening and extreme utterances out of the context of more moderate rhetoric?
5. A tough question: Should television executives refuse terrorist demands for airtime, even when accompanied by threats against hostages?

This is an uphill battle because violence, like space walks and flaming volcanoes, is made to order for television. The competitive pressures are heavy. There are few kudos for young reporters and camera crews who come back saying they left the blood and guts to the other station.

I believe, however, that the public can provide incentives for a different kind of competition than the current ratings race. I would like to see the reaction to the first station that announces, on the air, "We will report developments on this hostage situation as they occur, but we will not keep cameras posted there in order not to encourage these and other terrorists."

WashingTONIAN - Oct. 1981 pp. 190-144. short

Go Get Some Milk and Cookies and Watch the Murders on Television

by Dan Schorr

I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and that in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision we shall discover a new and unbearable disturbance of the modern peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by television—of that I am quite sure.

—E.B. White (1938)

John W. Hinckley Jr. causes me to reflect, having recently turned 65, on what the media age has wrought. Hinckley's unhappy lifetime of some 26 years coincides roughly with my life in television. Whatever else made him want to shoot a President, Hinckley epitomizes the perverse effects of our violence-prone culture of entertainment.

Hinckley weaves together strands of media-stimulated fantasy, fan frenzy, and the urge to proclaim identity by starring in a televised event. His success is attested to by everything that has happened since March 30, when he managed to preempt the regular programs listed in his copy of *TV Guide* to bring on command performances by Dan Rather, Frank Reynolds, Roger Mudd, and the other news superstars. Since November 22, 1963, [illegible] electronic special reports—the modern equivalent of the old newspaper extra—have been America's way of certifying a "historic event."

Much has been shown to Hinckley's generation to lower the threshold of resistance to violent acts. When the time came for Hinckley to act—to plug himself into this continuum of television and movie violence—the screenplay was easily written, the roles nearly preassigned. The media-conscious "public" President, Ronald Reagan, attracted the cameras, [illegible] attracted the crowds, which provided [illegible] the arena, and the cover for the assailant. The network cameras routinely assigned, since the Kennedy assassination, to "the presidential watch" recorded the "actuality" and showed it in hypnotic, incessant replays. The audience tingled to the all-too-familiar "special report" emblazoned across the screen.

To nobody's surprise, the celebration of violence stirred would-be imitators. The Secret Service recorded an astonishing number of subsequent threats on the President's life. One of them came from Edward Michael Robinson, 22, who had watched the TV coverage and later told police that Hinckley had appeared to him in a dream, telling him to "bring completion to Hinckley's reality."

Psychiatrist Walter Menninger examined Sara Jane Moore, who tried to kill President Ford in 1975, and found it no coincidence that two weeks earlier a well-publicized attempt on Ford's life had been made by Squeaky Fromme.

"There is no doubt," Dr. Menninger told me, "of the effect of the broad, rapid, and intense dissemination of such an event. The scene in front of the Washington Hilton must have been indelibly etched in everybody's mind with an immediacy that does not happen with the print media. We have learned from the studies of television that people do get influenced by what they experience on television."

The broadcasting industry says it can't help it if occasionally a disturbed person tries to act out depicted violence—fictional or actual. In 1975, a Vietnam veteran in Hyattsville, Maryland, who had told his wife, "I watch television too much," began sniping at passersby in a way he had noted during an episode of *S.W.A.T.*—and, like the fictional sniper, was killed by a police sharpshooter.

The American Medical Association reported in 1977 that physicians were telling of cases of injury from TV imitation showing up in their offices and hospitals. One doctor treated two children who, playing Batman, had jumped off a roof. Another said a child who had set fire to a house was copying an arson incident viewed on television.

No court has yet held television legally culpable for the violence it is accused of stimulating. In Florida in 1978, fifteen-year-old Ronny Zamora was convicted—after a televised trial—of killing his elderly neighbor despite the novel plea of "involuntary subliminal television intoxication." The parents of a California girl who had been sexually assaulted in 1974 in a manner depicted three days earlier in an NBC television drama lost their suit against the network.

That's as it should be. I support the constitutional right of the broadcasting industry to depict violence, just as I support *Hustler* magazine's right to depict pornography—with distaste. As Jules Feiffer, the cartoonist and civil libertarian, has noted, one sometimes finds oneself in the position of defending people one wouldn't dine with. What troubles me, as I reflect on the case of John Hinckley, is the reluctance of television to acknowledge its contribution to fostering an American culture of violence, not only by the way it presents fantasy but by the way it conveys reality—and by the way it blurs the line between the two.

Violence is one of the manifestations of the quest for identity. When you've lost your identity, you become a violent person looking for identity.

—Marshall McLuhan (1977)

In 1974 Reg Murphy, then editor of the *Atlanta Constitution* (he is now publisher of the *Baltimore Sun*), was kid-

[illegible]

Daniel Schorr, formerly CBS national and foreign correspondent, is now senior correspondent of Ted Turner's Cable News Network. Donna Bird [illegible] contributed to this article.

A Veteran TV Reporter Asks What Television Is Doing to Our Children, to Our Country. Does It Sanitize Killing and Reward Violence?

By Daniel Schorr

napped. He says his abductors immediately sped to an apartment and turned on a TV set to see whether their act had made the evening news.

In 1971 prison rioters in Attica, New York, listed as a primary demand that their grievances be aired on TV.

In 1977 in Indianapolis, Anthony George Kiritsis wired a sawed-off shotgun to the neck of a mortgage company officer, led him out in front of the police and TV cameras, and yelled: "Get those goddamn cameras on! I'm a goddamn national hero!"

In 1974 in Sarasota, Florida, an anchorwoman on television station WXLT said on the air, "In keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts in living color, you're going to see another first—an attempt at suicide." Whereupon she pulled a gun out of a shopping bag and shot herself fatally in the head.

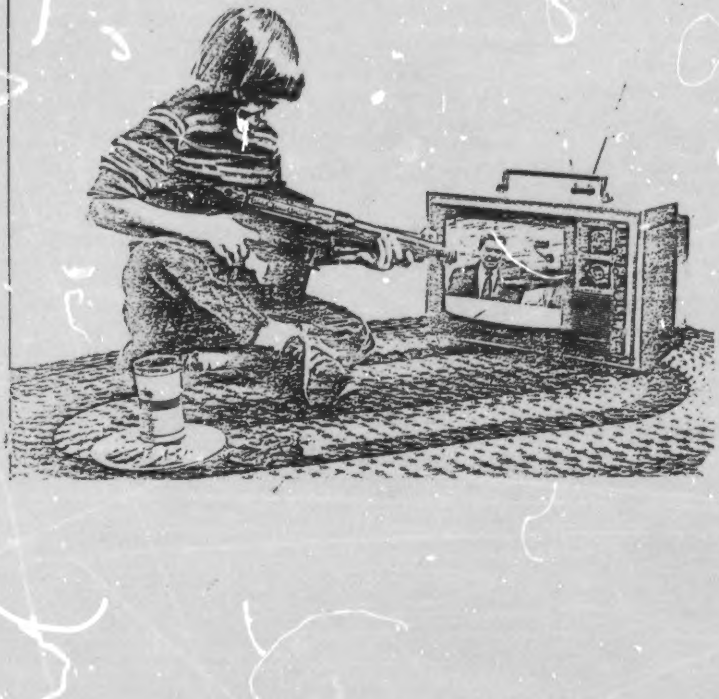
These incidents—the list could go on and on—were all aspects of the phenomenon of the mass media as grand arbiter of identity, validator of existence. Descartes might say today, "I appear on television, therefore I am."

One becomes accustomed, after working a long time in the medium, to hearing strangers remark, without elaboration, "I saw you on television!" One even gets inured to being hauled over to meet somebody's relatives. It is as though the TV personality has an existence of its own. I experienced the other side of this phenomenon in 1976 when I stopped broadcasting for CBS. People asked, solicitously, if everything was all right—as though, being off the air, I had ceased to be in some existential sense.

"Getting on television" has become a preoccupation of people in government, politics, and industry, not to mention all manner of single-issue advocates. Candidates will fashion their campaigns around "photo opportunities." Senators will be drawn by the presence of cameras to legislative hearings they otherwise would skip.

Many people will do almost anything to get on TV. Some will even kill.

Anthony Quainton, former head of the State D[illegible]s Office for Combating Terr[illegible] [illegible]ciates the increase in casualties [illegible]jackings and hostage-



takings with the desire of terrorists to insure news-media attention. Deliberate acts of horror—like the tossing out of slain victims—are planned as media events. On the other hand, the failure of the hijacking of a Turkish plane to Bulgaria in May was at least partly due to the fact that two of the terrorists had left the plane to give a press conference.

Sometimes the aim is to hijack television itself. When the radical Baader-Meinhof gang in West Germany kidnapped a politician in 1975 as hostage for the release of five imprisoned comrades, it forced German television to show each prisoner boarding a plane and to broadcast dictated propaganda statements. "For 72 hours we lost control of our medium," a German television executive later said.

When Arab terrorists seized the Vienna headquarters of OPEC in 1975, killing three persons and taking oil ministers hostage, the terrorists' plan called for them to occupy the building until TV cameras arrived.

A central feature of the plan of the San Francisco "Symbionese Liberation Army," which kidnapped Patricia Hearst, was the exploitation of the media—forcing radio and television to play its tapes and carry its messages.

The Hanafi Muslims' hostage-taking occupation of three locations in Washington in 1976 was a classic case of media-age terrorism. The leader, Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, spent much of his time giving interviews by telephone while his wife checked on what was being broadcast.

"These crimes are highly contagious," warns Dr. Harold Visotsky, head of the department of psychiatry at Northwestern University. "Deranged persons have a passion for keeping up with the news and imitating it."

It does not seem to matter much if they are keeping up with "the news" or with "entertainment," for more and more the distinction is thinly drawn. A real attempt on the President's life produces a rash of threats. A prime-time drama about a bomb on an airplane produces a rash of reports of bombs on airplanes.

In all of this, television claims to be innocent—a helpless eyewitness, sometimes even a hostage. It's not that simple.

To begin with, television has helped blur the lines between reality and fantasy in the general consciousness.

Television news itself—obliged to coexist with its entertainment environment, seeking to present facts with the tools of fantasy—ends up with a dramatized version of life. Everything that goes into making a well-paced, smoothly edited "[illegible]" subtly changes reality into a [illegible] exciting allegory of events. The confusion is compounded by the use of "*cinéma vérité*" techniques in fictional dramas, and the modern forms of fact-and-fiction "docudramas" and "reenactments" of events.

It began to come home to me that audiences were blurring the distinction between reality and entertainment when I received telephone calls from several persons, during the 1973 Senate Watergate hearings that preempted soap operas, asking that the networks "cancel" a boring witness and "put back John Dean and his nice wife." Moreover, some friends of mine praised a "documentary" shown by NBC, *The Raid at Entebbe*, and had to be reminded that it was a reenactment.

A woman was bound and gagged by a robber who told the victim's four-year-old boy to watch television for a while before calling for help. The child looked at TV for the next three hours, ignoring his mother's desperate efforts to get his attention.

The gradual erosion of the line between fact and fantasy, between news and theater, can have serious consequences. People slow to react to accidents and muggings may be experiencing the existential question of whether these things are really happening. A woman wrote columnist Abigail van Buren of being bound and gagged by a robber who told the victim's four-year-old boy to watch television for a while before calling for help. The child looked at TV for the next three hours, ignoring his mother's desperate efforts to get his attention. Perhaps, to the child, the show was more real than his mother's muffled screams.

Having obscured the difference between fantasy and reality, television offers incentives to people who are seeking emphatic ways of getting recognition. Innocent hand-waving, as an attention-getting device, yields to demonstrations, which in turn yield to riots.

In my own experience, covering urban unrest for CBS in the 1960s, threatening rhetoric tended to overpower moderate rhetoric and be selected for the network's *Evening News* because it made "better television." I have no doubt that television helped to build up militant blacks like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown within the black community by giving them preferred exposure. Nonviolent leaders found themselves obliged to escalate the militancy of their own rhetoric. When Martin Luther King Jr. came to Washington in 1968 to discuss plans for the "poor people's march" that he did not live to lead, he told me he had to allude to possibilities for disruption as a way of getting media attention.

At a community meeting after the first night of rioting in the Watts area of Los Angeles in 1965, most of those who spoke appealed for calm. But a teenager who seized the microphone and called for "going after the whiteys" was featured on evening TV news programs. A moderate commented, "Look to me like he [the white man] want us to riot." Another said, "If that's the way they read it, that's the way we'll write the book."

In recent years, television news, compelled to come to terms with its own potency, has sought to enforce guidelines for coverage of group violence. Television tries to guard against being an immediate instigator of violence, but its reaction is too little and too late to overcome the cumulative consequences of a generation of depicted violence. It is like trying to control proliferation of nuclear weapons after distributing nuclear reactors over a prolonged period.

> *The most important thing is that a causal relationship has been shown between violence viewing and aggression.*
>
> —Dr. Jesse Steinfeld, Surgeon General of the United States (1972)

For three decades, since the time when there were 10 million TV sets in America, I have watched efforts to determine objectively the effects of televised violence while the TV industry strove to sweep the issue under the carpet.

What television hated most of all to acknowledge was that violence on TV was not incidental or accidental but a consciously fostered element in the ratings race. In 1976 David Rintels, president of the Writers Guild in Los Angeles, where most of the blood-and-guts scripts are spawned, told a congressional committee, "The networks not only approve violence on TV, they have been known to request and inspire it.

"There is so much violence on television," he said, "because the networks want it. They want it because they think they can attract viewers by it. It attracts sponsors. Affiliate stations welcome it."

A personal experience brought home to me the industry's sensitivity to the subject. In January 1969 my report for an *Evening News* telecast, summarizing the interim findings of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, was altered shortly before air time at the direction of Richard N. Salant, president of CBS News, to eliminate a comment about television. The passage cited the commission's view that while "most persons will not kill after seeing a single violent television program, . . . it is possible that many learn some of their attitudes about violence from years of TV exposure and may be likely to engage in violence." For management to override the news judgment of the "Cronkite show" was extremely rare.

Riots and assassinations would bring the issue periodically to the fore, but the research had been going on for a long time. For more than a quarter of a century social scientists have studied the effects of violence-viewing—especially on children.

- At Stanford University, Professor Albert Bandura reported that children three to six years of age whose toys were taken away after they had seen films showing aggression would be more likely to pound an inflated doll in their frustration than children who had not seen such films.
- A Canadian study by R.S. Walters and E. Llewellyn Thomas found that high school students who had viewed aggressive films were more likely than others to administer strong electric shocks to students making errors on an exam.
- An experiment conducted in Maryland for the National Institute of Mental Health found serious fights in school more common among high school students who watched violent TV programs.
- Bradley Greenberg and Joseph Dominick, studying Michigan public-school pupils, found that "higher exposure to television violence in entertainment was associated with greater approval of violence and greater willingness to use it in real life."
- Drs. Dorothy and Jerome Singer of Yale University concluded from an extensive series of interviews that the children who watched the most television were likely to act most aggressively in family situations. Although they could not produce a "smoking gun" that would influence the TV industry, they argued that they had eliminated every other factor that could account for the high correlation between aggressive behavior and

At St. E's, the Patients Thought Hinckley "Was Nuts."

The average American watches television for four hours and 30 seconds every day, according to A.C. Nielsen figures. Women watch the most: four hours and 47 minutes a day. Men watch four hours and six minutes. Children age two to eleven watch three hours and 52 minutes a day, and children age twelve to seventeen watch the least: three hours and seventeen minutes.

For many Washingtonians, television is kept in its proper place and perspective. Research shows that Washingtonians read more and watch less television than residents of any other major city in the country. But television is used increasingly as a babysitter or an opiate in institutions. To find out how much television is watched by those who might have trouble discriminating between television and real life, we surveyed the TV habits at five area institutions.

At St. Elizabeths Hospital, mental patients are permitted to watch unlimited television. Social worker Helen Bergman, who deals with men and women aged 25 to 35, says the television is on in the patient lounge all day long. Patients watch soap operas during the day, and in the evening they vote when there's a conflict over which show to watch. Bergman says that many patients are upset by excessive violence, and that some of the more disturbed patients talk to the television and laugh inappropriately at it. She personally dislikes television because it discourages patient interaction. One staff member says the employees watch as much TV as the patients and would be unhappy if its use were restricted.

Patients are encouraged to watch news events, and they were particularly interested in the coverage of the Reagan shooting. Bergman recalls that one patient remarked, "Boy, was he nuts," in reference to John Hinckley.

The Cole Residence in Northeast DC is a group home for boys 16 to 18 who are awaiting trial for minor offenses. Rick Bricher, assistant administrator, says no restrictions are placed on television viewing. Bricher says the staff encourages residents to watch special programs, particularly those that focus on black issues. Sports programs are popular, as well as network programs featuring black actors, such as *The Jeffersons*. What will be watched is determined by majority rule.

Inmates at DC's Lorton Reformatory are permitted to watch unrestricted television. The set is on every day from around noon until 11 PM, except when inmates are being counted. Salanda Whitfield, a Lorton administrator, says each dormitory has a 25-inch color set and the inmates vote on what to watch. Because inmates work on different schedules, someone is watching television all the time. Soap operas, sports, police, and adventure shows are the most popular. Some of the inmates watch the local news to find out who got caught doing what, because they often know the people involved in area crime. Occasionally they speculate on who might be the perpetrator of an unsolved crime. When the Supreme Court is in session, many inmates watch the Monday-night news to see if any decisions affecting their cases have been handed down.

Whitfield says inmates admire the "flashy types" in action shows. He doesn't think Lorton inmates are sophisticated enough to pick up any new ideas from television criminals, though they might get a new "wrinkle."

Dr. Martin Stein, an administrator at the Dominion Psychiatric Treatment Center in Falls Church, says the use of television is an area of great concern to the facility's staff. The patients, primarily adolescents, are not restricted in what they watch. However, a busy schedule, which includes a full day of school, leaves little time for television. Stein adds that the center does not want to shelter patients from normal activities and that the time and effort of monitoring television could be put to better use by the staff. Like Bergman at St. Elizabeths, Stein expresses concern that television hinders patient interaction.

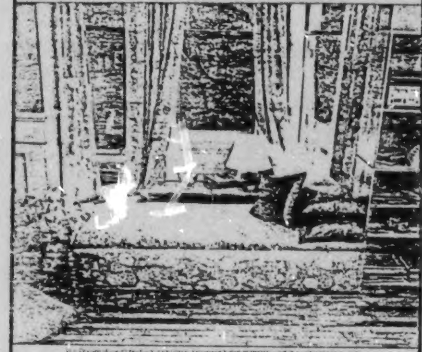
Stein says the patients prefer comedies (such as *M*A*S*H* and *Fantasy Island*) to drama and action shows. They tend to avoid programs that contain excessive violence, and become anxious when such programs are on. According to Stein, schizophrenic patients often think the television is talking to or about them or sending them special messages.

For children aged four to ten at the Fairfax Brewster School, a private school for normal students at Bailey's Crossroads, the *Dukes of Hazzard* is the overwhelmingly favorite show. Nearly all named a character on that show when asked who they would be if they could be a television character. Sports were also popular, along with *Bugs Bunny*, *Woody Woodpecker*, and *The Greatest American Hero*. The children disliked the news (boring), soap operas, and *The Incredible Hulk* (dumb). Out of seven children, only one had a parent who specified the programs she could and could not watch. Most watched some programs with their families and more than half frequently ate dinner in front of the television.

When asked the type of program he enjoyed most, one nine-year-old said he liked shows in which stuntmen were shot or pushed over cliffs because "it's neat how they don't bleed or get hurt."

—Heather Pearce

S·H·I·N·E·R·A



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viewing of "action oriented" shows.

- Dr. Leonard Berkowitz of the University of Wisconsin, in two experiments ten years apart, found that third-graders watching a great many violent programs were likely to be rated by other pupils as high in aggressive behavior and that, at nineteen, most of them were still described as "aggressive" by their peers. In fact, reported Dr. Berkowitz, the amount of television viewed at the age of nine is "one of the best predictors of whether a person will be found to be aggressive in later life."

Congress took an early interest in the question of violence in TV programs. In 1952 the House Commerce Committee held hearings on excessive sex and violence on television. Senate hearings on TV violence and juvenile deliquency, conducted by Senators Estes Kefauver of Tennessee and Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, stirred episodic public interest. The hearing transcripts make a tall stack, adding up to fifteen years of congressional alarm over television, and industry reassurance that it was addressing the problem.

A University of Wisconsin study shows that the amount of television watched at the age of nine is "one of the best predictors of whether a person will be found to be aggressive in later life."

The controversy over television assumed a new dimension of national concern in the wake of the urban riots and assassinations of the 1960s. In 1968, after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, President Johnson named a commission, headed by Dr. Milton Eisenhower, to inquire into the causes of violence and how it might be prevented.

Between October and December 1968, the Eisenhower Commission held hearings on television, questioning social scientists and industry executives about the extent to which the medium might be the instigator or abettor of violent acts. One commission member, Leon Jaworski, later to be the Watergate prosecutor, expressed the belief that television might have "a tremendous responsibility" for violence in America.

The television networks acknowledged no such responsibility. When

Commissioner Albert E. Jenner asked whether "the depiction of violence has an effect upon the viewer." Dr. Frank Stanton, president of CBS, replied: "It may or may not have. That is the question we don't have the answer to."

Nevertheless, the commission decided to formulate an answer. After a long debate—from which Lloyd N. Cutler, the executive director, disqualified himself because of his law firm's TV-industry clients—the panel declared in its final report that it was "deeply troubled by television's constant portrayal of violence . . . pandering to a public preoccupation with violence that television itself has helped to generate."

The panel's report concluded: "A constant diet of violence on TV has an adverse effect on human character and attitudes. Violence on television encourages violent forms of behavior and fosters moral and social values in daily life which are unacceptable in a civilized society. We do not suggest that television is a principal cause of violence in our society. We do suggest that it is a contributing factor."

A two-volume report of the commission's "Task Force on Mass Media and Violence" concluded that, as a short-range effect, those who see violent acts portrayed learn to perform them and may imitate them in a similar situation, and that, as a long-term effect, exposure to media violence "socializes audiences into the norms, attitudes, and values for violence."

The Eisenhower Commission's report on television had little impact—it was overshadowed in the news media by its more headline-making findings about riots, civil disobedience, and police brutality. The networks acted to reduce the violence in animated cartoons for children and killings in adult programs, and the motion-picture industry quickly compensated by increasing the incidence and vividness of its bloodletting.

However, Congress, on the initiative of Rhode Island Senator John O. Pastore, a long-standing critic of television, moved to mandate a completely new investigation, calling on the US Surgeon General for a report on TV and violence that would, in effect, parallel the report associating cigarette smoking with cancer.

Worried about what might emerge from such a study, the television industry lobbied with President Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Robert Finch, to influence the organization and conduct of the investigation. It successfully opposed seven candidates for appointment to the committee, including the best-known researchers in the field. The Surgeon General's Committee on Television and Social Behavior, as constituted, comprised five experts affiliated

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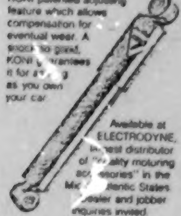

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with the broadcasting industry, and four behavioral scientists innocent of mass-media background.

Three years and $1.8 million later, the committee produced its report, "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence," supported by five volumes of technical studies. The full report, read by few, provided telling data on the role of TV violence as instigator of aggression in young people, but the nineteen-page summary that would determine the public perception emerged opaque and ambiguous, after an intense struggle within the committee.

"Under the circumstances," it said, watching violent fare on television could cause a young person to act aggressively, but "children imitate and learn from everything they see." The research studies, it said, indicated "a modest association between viewing of television and violence among at least some children," but "television is only one of the many factors which in time may precede aggressive behavior."

The summary danced around the crucial issue of causation: "Several findings of the survey studied can be cited to sustain the hypothesis that viewing of violent television has a causal relation to aggressive behavior, though neither individually nor collectively are the findings conclusive."

The ambiguity was mirrored in the pages of the *New York Times*. A front-page story on January 12, 1972, based on a leak, was headlined TV VIOLENCE HELD UNHARMFUL TO YOUTH. But when the report was officially released a week later, the *Times* story said, "The study shows for the first time a causal connection between violence shown on television and subsequent behavior by children."

"It is clear to me," said Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld, presenting his report at a hearing conducted by Senator Pastore, "that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and remedial action."

There was no significant remedial action. As the decade of urban violence and assassination ebbed, the issue of television violence faded, to come back another day. And another day would bring another report.

Even before the latest incidents of violence, a new inquiry had started. Dr. Eli A. Rubinstein had first come to the Surgeon General's committee as a vice chairman fresh from the National Institute of Mental Health. His experience with the investigation led him to make the study of the mass media his career.

In 1980, Dr. Rubinstein, now professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina, persuaded President Carter's Surgeon General, Dr. Julius Richmond, to assemble an ad hoc committee to prepare an updated version of the 1972 Surgeon General's report on its tenth anniversary. Two volumes of new technical studies have already been compiled. The conclusions are yet to be written, but there is no doubt that they will reinforce and expand the original timidly stated findings.

One thing the new report will do, Dr. Rubinstein said, is to lay to rest the theory that depicted violence can actually decrease aggression by serving as a "cathartic"—the cleansing and purging of an audience's emotions that Aristotle held to be the highest test of tragedy. Advanced by some behavioral scientists studying television, the theory was examined during the 1972 study for the Surgeon General, which concluded that there was "no evidence to support a catharsis interpretation." The updated report, citing new empirical studies, will make that point more strongly.

One thing the new report will do is to lay to rest the theory that depicted violence can decrease aggression by serving as a "cathartic."

"A tremendous amount of work has been done over the past ten years, and the volume of literature has probably tripled," Dr. Rubinstein says. "If any mistake was made ten years ago, it was to be too qualified about the relationship between TV violence and aggressiveness. We have a lot of new evidence about causality and about what constitutes causality. We know much more about how television produces aggressive behavior. We know more about how fantasy can crowd out reality, and the specific influences of television on disturbed minds.

"The fundamental scientific evidence indicates that television affects the viewer in more ways than we realized initially. You will recall that the original smoking-and-health study was limited to the lungs, and later it was learned how smoking affects the heart and other parts of the body. In the same way, we now know that the original emphasis on TV violence was too narrow. Television affects not only a predisposition towards violence, but the whole range of social and psychological development of the younger generation."

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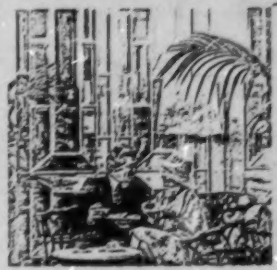

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The new Surgeon General's report, scheduled for release by the Reagan administration in 1982, is likely to be challenged by the TV industry with all the vigor displayed by the tobacco lobby when opposing the report on smoking and cancer. Inevitably, it will be read for clues to violent behavior of people like John Hinckley.

In the absence of family, peer, and school relationships, television becomes the most compatible substitute for real-life experience.

—National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (1969)

What made Hinckley different, what made him shoot the President are ultimately matters for psychiatry and the law to determine. But the "media factor" played a part.

As Hinckley withdrew from school and family life, he retreated progressively into a waiting world of violent fantasy, spending more and more time alone with television—an exciting companion that made no demands on him.

But television was not the only part of the media working to merge fact and fantasy for Hinckley. He was strongly influenced by *Taxi Driver*, a motion picture about a psychopath who found the answer to his anxieties through his obsession with violence. Like the taxi driver, Hinckley oscillated between wanting to kill a public figure to impress the object of his affections, and wanting to "rescue" her from "evil" surroundings. Paul Schrader, author of the screenplay, tells me that the moment he heard that President Reagan had been shot, his reaction was, "There goes another taxi driver!"

Hinckley was also affected by fan frenzy, a special manifestation of the media culture. It focused not only on Jodie Foster, the female lead in *Taxi Driver*, but also on former Beatle John Lennon, whose music he played on the guitar. Last New Year's Eve, after Lennon's murder, Hinckley taped a monologue, in his motel room near Denver, in which he mourned: "John and Jodie, and now one of 'em's dead.

"Sometimes," he said, "I think I'd rather just see her not . . . not on earth than being with other guys. I wouldn't wanna stay on earth without her on earth. It'd have to be some kind of pact between Jodie and me."

And the influences working on Hinckley extended beyond the visual media. The idea of a suicide pact was apparently drawn from *The Fan*, a novel by Bob Randall that Hinckley had borrowed—along with books about the Kennedy family and Gordon Liddy's *Will*—from a public library in Evergreen, Colorado. In the book, the paranoid fan of a Broadway star, feeling rejected in his advances by mail, kills the actress and himself as she opens in a theater production. Early last March, as Foster was preparing to open in a New Haven stock-company play, Hinckley slipped a letter under her door saying, "After tonight John Lennon and I will have a lot in common."

The plan that finally congealed this welter of media drawn inspirations and impelled the young misfit to action was a presidential assassination. Before setting out, he—like the fictional fan—left behind a letter to be read posthumously. It was to tell Foster that he intended, through "this historical deed, to gain your respect and love."

As though to document his place in the media hall of fame, he dated and timed the letter and left behind, in his room in the Park Central Hotel, tapes of his guitar playing, his New Year's Eve soliloquy, and a telephone conversation with Foster.

A failure at most things, Hinckley was a spectacular media success who had survived to enjoy his celebrityhood—a lesson that won't be lost on other driven persons.

No one could doubt his importance or challenge his identity as the news cameras clustered around the federal courthouse when he arrived for his arraignment in a presidential-size limousine heralded by police sirens.

In the great made-for-TV drama, participants more "normal" than Hinckley seemed also to play assigned roles, as if caught up in some ineluctable screenplay. The TV anchors were reviewed for smoothness, composure, and factual accuracy under stress. Secretary of State Haig, making a gripping appearance in the White House press room, was panned for gasping and for misreading his lines. President Reagan, with considerable support from White House aides and from the smoothly reassuring Dr. Dennis O'Leary, himself an instant hit, won plaudits for a flawless performance as the wisecracking, death-defying leader of the Free World.

The effect was to reinforce the pervasive sense of unreality engendered by a generation of television shoot-outs—the impression that being shot doesn't really hurt, that everything will turn out all right in time for the final commercial.

One can understand the desire to assure the world that the government is functioning. But Dr. David Hamburg, the psychiatrist and former president of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, believes it harmful to imply that a shooting can be without apparent physical consequence.

"Getting shot is not like falling off a horse," Dr. Hamburg says. "To sanitize an act of violence is a disservice. It is unwise to minimize the fact that a President can get hurt and that he can bleed."

One more contribution had been made to obscuring the pain and reality of violence, to blurring the critical distinction between fiction and fact. The media President was, in his way, as much a product of the age of unreality as was John Hinckley, the media freak. In the media age, reality had been the first casualty. □

How Many Murders Can Your Kids Watch?

The National Coalition on Television Violence says these are the most violent programs on national television. The data was compiled between February and May of 1981, and the scores for each program are in violent acts per hour.

Prime-time Shows	Network	Acts of Violence
Walking Tall	NBC	25
Vegas	ABC	18
Lobo	NBC	18
Greatest American Hero	ABC	18
Incredible Hulk	CBS	14
Magnum P.I.	CBS	14
Hart to Hart	ABC	14
Dukes of Hazzard	CBS	14
B.J. & the Bear	NBC	14
Fantasy Island	ABC	11
Enos	CBS	11

Saturday Morning Cartoons	Network	Acts of Violence
Thundarr the Barbarian	ABC	64
Daffy Duck	NBC	52
Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner	CBS	51
Superfriends	ABC	38
Richie Rich/Scooby Doo	ABC	30
Plasticman, Baby Plas	ABC	28
Heathcliff & Dingbat	ABC	28
Fonz	ABC	28
Tom & Jerry	CBS	27
Popeye	CBS	26
Johnny Quest	NBC	25
Drak Pak	CBS	23
Batman	NBC	19
Godzilla/Hong Kong Phooey	NBC	18
Flintstones	NBC	13
Tarzan-Lone Ranger	CBS	13

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Mr. HUGHES. Thank you very much, Mr. Schorr, for a very excellent statement and one that presents a lot of very insightful issues and ramifications of the overall problem.

Mr. Schorr, you indicate that the subject of your testimony is a little bit different from that which we will hear shortly. That is, you emphasize that sensational news is an impetus to what I would characterize as copycat crimes, rather than a thesis that overall violance, particularly on a cumulative basis, leads to antisocial or aggressive acts in children and others.

One of the common themes in both areas, however, is the obscuring of the pain and reality of violence. the blurring of the critical distinction between fiction and fact. Should TV make a reality of the pain and suffering of violence? I would venture to say that on occasion, when it is not so obscure, like the execution of a Vietnamese on prime time TV, there is an overall revulsion to the violence which would tend to make people reflect on that violence.

Would you comment on that?

Mr. SCHORR. Yes. It is very difficult because I believe the function of television news is, in fact, to mirror reality. In fact, it is the last refuge of reality on television. Therefore, to obscure the fact that there is real pain could, in itself, be counterproductive.

One of the harmful effects, I believe, of what has happened in television entertainment, after it began to react to too much blood and guts, was to eliminate the blood and guts and to have people shot and die off camera. I think there is a corresponding danger in making it appear that people don't hurt, that people, when shot or set on fire, don't hurt. I think as much as possible we should try to mirror reality. It can, however, be done with taste. It doesn't have to be infinitely repeated, and some of the worst shots which are simply in bad taste can be eliminated.

I would not, however, try to disguise the reality that there is real pain in being shot.

Mr. HUGHES. A good example of that would be the after effect of the assassination attempt on the President, the pain, the long-lasting pain, suffering, and disfigurement of Mr. Brady, the press secretary.

Mr. SCHORR. That's right.

We have a word we use in television called "generic footage." That is, when something becomes so general and so useful to illustrate certain situations, you just use it all the time. The scene of the shooting of President Reagan in front of the Washington Hilton Hotel was really a very good piece of television tape. It had a lot of drama to it. It is very tempting to producers and correspondents to keep using it all the time, every time you mention the fact that the President was shot in March of 1981.

What I suggest is that when it happened, and when it was available, it had to be shown. You could not deny that to the public. But does it have to be repeated with such hypnotic effect so often every time you mention it? Isn't it enough that people have already seen it?

Mr. HUGHES. We are going to hear testimony later this morning from a panel of television people that suggest, I think, the bottom line, that the case has not been made for the connection between violence on TV and crime, and dismiss it, that there is no responsibility.

What is the responsibility of the profession to exercise self-restraint, to develop guidelines in this area, and to try to determine if there is some degree of reality? I suspect that we will never find a "smoking gun," if that's what they are looking for. So what is the ultimate responsibility of the profession that we know as journalism?

Mr. SCHORR. The dilemma for television news today—I come from a long history of newspaper work. I am old enough to have gone through all these cycles of journalism. In the old days something happened and you stood around and you went and reported it. More and more today in the television age things will happen because of television and things will happen because television is there. Therefore, television can no longer claim to be a neutral bystander and observer. It isn't, and it knows it isn't.

In 1968 it realized that every time during the night that a mobile camera truck went out and turned lights on somewhere, there was likely to be a riot, because the camera lights were on and people wanted a riot in the presence of those cameras. Therefore, if television becomes a stimulator of these things, television has to accept its responsibility whether it would like to or not. It cannot blind itself to the fact that people will wave hands or demonstrate or kill to get on television.

One has to start, therefore, by saying that while we would like to consider ourselves neutral in covering the news, let's face the fact that a lot of that news would not happen if we weren't there. Once that is so, you face a terrible, terrible burden of deciding at what point are you simply covering the news—and that's "just the facts, ma'am"—or at what point are you responsible for an increase of violence in society. We are not just reporters, which is why I am before you today. I begin to realize that we do have some larger responsibilities than getting one more rating point over the next station.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you.

The gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. SAWYER. Just a couple of questions, Mr. Schorr.

I know, for example, that your first name is Daniel, and you may or may not know that my name is Harold, and I know the chairman's first name is Bill, but I don't know anybody's middle name. Yet, we have so dignified these Presidential assassins that we know them by all three names—John Wilkes Booth, James Earl Ray vis-a-vis Martin Luther King, and Lee Harvey Oswald. You know, it kind of says something. We have stressed it so much that we have not just gone by Lee Oswald or James Ray, that it is——

Mr. SCHORR. Have you learned Hinckley's middle name?

Mr. SAWYER. You know, that's kind of peculiar. We probably will.

Mr. SCHORR. We will.

Mr. SAWYER. I am sure we will start developing that.

Mr. SCHORR. It's "W." That's all I know.

Mr. SAWYER. I don't even know the President's middle name. You know, John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln, but I don't know whether Abraham Lincoln had a middle name, either, but you sure know John Wilkes Booth did.

But getting back to the essence of it, aren't we really bucking a problem like we were in prohibition, or currently in the case of drugs, that where there is a demand there is always a purveyor to meet the demand. Isn't the basic problem that this is the news that the American public seems to want? And as long as they seem to want that kind of news, with those kinds of details—like Stokely Carmichael as opposed to a moderate, less-newsworthy spokesman, if you will. Isn't there always going to be somebody to give them the news that they want?

Mr. SCHORR. Congressman Sawyer, first of all you can't classify all Americans as all the same way, or even individual Americans, as reacting the same way in different situations. It is true that at the lowest level, in the level of sensory perception, Americans like to have their senses titilated. Nothing titilates the senses more than violence or the threat of violence, and nothing will send a tingle through the heart of a white American more than to be told that a black American might come around and burn his house down. That is very tingly and very entertaining in a certain sort of way.

But Americans are also something else. Americans will also sit back and realize what the consequences of some of these things are, and they can set up different incentives for television stations, which I guess was the main point that I never got around to expressing. If Americans can organize to get better cartoons for children on Saturday morning, and if Americans can form organizations, not all of which I necessarily support, to organize boycotts of companies doing a kind of entertainment they don't like, what I would like to see is Americans also exerting a little bit of pressure on television stations by telling them "we don't ask you to stick with every hostage situation to the last minute when nothing is happening; we don't ask you to have your reporters try to get scoops by calling up people holding hostages in order to ask them whom they are going to kill next and all the rest of it. On the contrary, we may turn to the other station if we think you are not being a responsible public citizen."

Mr. SAWYER. Let's look at something we have all just come off of watching and listening to, and that is this debacle in Chicago, which was probably one of the world's rottenest elections—racially, personally, every other way. That was because the media picked out all of those parts and played them up and got a whole national audience. You know, I am watching to see who is mayor of Chicago this morning. Normally I could care less, or just ho hum, so and so won the election. If they talked about better police service in Chicago, better fire service, better maintenance of the streets, better education, nobody in the Nation would have paid any attention to that election unless they lived in Chicago, because certainly we get those kinds of legitimate issue arguments in virtually every major city mayoral election.

But because the media picked out these racial overtones—the nasty overtones—I dare say everybody in the country was watching that election to see how it came out, and was interested in it.

That speaks for what the people are interested in. The media could have given more attention to that election, talking about the legitimate issues, and I assume there were legitimate issues discussed, although goodness knows what they were because nobody ever mentioned them on the media.

But assuming they talked about things like Chicago police protection, fire protection, schools, public services, street cleaning, education, and whatnot, the media could have harped on that just as much, just as long, and just as heavily as they did about the issues that were there, and everybody would have gotten bored and said, "why are they telling us all these stupid arguments about Chicago? We don't live in Chicago."

Doesn't it tell you kind of how you get the audience and how are you going to stop the media from doing it, when that is what the audience seems to be looking for? You are able to convert a little Chicago mayoral election into something like a national Presidential election, as far as most people's focus of interest was concerned, all through that smear-type thing repeated by the media.

Mr. SCHORR. Congressman, let me try to separate out several issues. If we want to talk about the politics of it and as to whether this election was a little municipal election or one with national significance, let's leave that one for later, because I don't agree with you——

Mr. SAWYER. But only because of the racial overtones.

Mr. SCHORR. I think it was a very important election in many respects. But let me get down to the side I am most qualified to talk about.

When you talk about the media making of this or the media making of that, I found it very interesting that both of the candidates denounced the media for smearing them. Both of them said they had gotten an unfair shake. Maybe the media must have been doing something right to have gotten into trouble with both of the candidates. Neither felt well served by it, which is kind of an interesting phenomenon in itself.

You will not soon remake the media to a point where it will deal only with what you consider to be constructive issues. That is a utopian vision. As a matter of fact, I am not sure we want it to happen because then we would lose the interest of our audiences. There comes a point where you cut off people.

I always remember that I have lived for a period of 3 or 4 years in societies where constructive news is emphasized and destructive news doesn't get on the air at all. That was in the Soviet Union, in Poland, and in Czechoslovakia, and Asia result, nobody pays any attention to the media in these countries.

Mr. SAWYER. You see, there you are making the very point I am making. If you just limit it to the local issues, the legitimate issues in a mayoral campaign, you wouldn't have had any big audience, and therefore, with these other tempting little things you know they're going to get a national audience, the media plays it I'm not blaming the media. I'm just saying I don't know how you stop this.

It did have national impact, but it only had national impact because of the racial overtones in it. Had it been a legitimate debate between even a white and a black candidate, if they had stayed with the issues, it wouldn't have had those overtones. But as they made it a racial issue, then you threaten an independent black candidate for President and everything else. But that all grew out of the racial part of it. That was played to the hilt by the media.

Mr. SCHORR. There is no question that——

Mr. SAWYER. Because that's where you got the national audience.

Mr. SCHORR [continuing]. There are certain issues that transcend the local. If you are dealing with a racial issue, that is a national issue. If you deal with potholes on LaSalle Street, those are not national issues. Clearly, when it verges on something of interest to the whole country, it becomes of national interest.

Mr. SAWYER. That's the whole point I was making. I think that while we aren't talking about violence there, it has some similarity in appeal to the general audience. I don't know how we quite avoid it.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you.

Just following up, first of all, I happen to believe—and I am willing to listen to be persuaded otherwise—that the media could have made other issues in that Chicago election the issues of the day. Perhaps the Chicago election did not deserve the type of national treatment that it received. I know, having been a candidate a few times, candidates endeavor to respond to the things that are of interest, and I think the media, perhaps, has some responsibility in this area. That's a part of the issue.

During the latter part of the Roman Empire, bread and circuses became the issues of the day. The cynics suggest that that is inherent in our society to some extent, that we have a little bit of that tendency to want to focus in on the more despicable side of human endeavors. I think that part of the issue—and I think that my colleague from Michigan has focused in on it somewhat—is just what is the responsibility of the media.

I would like to believe that Hal Washington and Mr. Epton would have focused in, not maybe on potholes, but on other issues that were relevant, if, in fact, that would have generated the kind of media attention that they, perhaps, sought. So, I have some question as to what is the responsibility of the media in these areas.

Mr. SCHORR. Mr. Chairman, I think one of the problems with this is that when you say the media do this and the media do that, the media make this the issue or make that the issue, is that this tends to obscure the fact that the media don't do much of anything. The media are more done to than doing. The media are there. They can be manipulated, they can be appealed to. If the candidate chooses to put out a commercial with racial overtones, it will be noted, and that will become an issue. If another candidate chooses to do something else, that will be noted. There isn't any central media group that says, "Let's make this the issue today." They are basically passive. They are basically reactive to what is happening. They are much more manipulated than manipulating. It is how the candidates act and what they do that will determine whether it is a local issue, or a national issue, or whether it is on issues of municipal finance, or if it becomes an issue of race between the two. They made their race for mayor, and they made their race a racial issue in the way they acted.

The media becomes an enormous megaphone which amplifies it. That cannot be avoided. We have national radio and national television in this country and it is not possible to keep the decibels down once the thing happens. That magnification will take place.

Mr. HUGHES. Well, just briefly, your suggestion as to what happened at Watts, where the moderate blacks, by and large, called for moderation, but these lower voices, that wanted to settle the issues peaceably, were overwhelmed by one individual suggesting that they take to the streets and kill the whiteys, which became the hue and cry that was publicized. Is the media reflecting the news of the day or creating it by giving that individual the platform?

Mr. SCHORR. In that situation, by taking it out of context and not indicating how atypical it was, I have no doubt that they helped to stimulate it. I hope that would not happen again. One of my reasons for singling it out is to hope to sensitize news directors, so that when a thing like that does happen, and they go over the young reporter's edited tape of that, they will say: "Wait a while, this meeting went on for a couple of hours; were there other viewpoints? Can your scripts say that only one person talked this way," and give a couple of sound cuts of other people talking in other ways.

I don't mean to censor these things out. I think you can't avoid them. I only suggest that news directors should be more sensitive to context in the existence of countervailing forces.

Mr. HUGHES. It might be interesting for this subcommittee in a future hearing to hear from Harold Washington and Mr. Epton on just that issue. The suggestion appears that, perhaps, since both of them took on the media this morning, that there may not have been a degree of balance in reporting. It also might suggest that both of them feel that in the context of the overall campaign their positions were distorted. Maybe that would be an area that we could explore.

The gentleman from Florida.

Mr. SHAW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I very much appreciate your being here, Mr. Schorr. I have been a fan of yours for some time, and it is an honor to be able to have this opportunity to hear from your directly and have this exchange.

I think there is no question regarding the results themselves, which show that race was very much an issue in the Chicago election. In reviewing the returns, we currently know that, and also whether it was the candidates' fault or not, the voters certainly split that way. So, I think the results are very obvious.

I think in looking at when we talk about responsibility of the media—and you have used that term several times—I think it, perhaps, breaks into two areas that we should consider. One, is the media a form of entertainment, or a resource of knowledge, and how is that viewed? Would you care to comment?

Mr. SCHORR. Yes. It seems fairly clear that there has been an evolution from the day of the small newspaper, which was basically a source of information—although after a while it added entertainment features to it—into radio, and finally into television. Television is, by its nature, mainly an entertainment medium, a large entertainment "dog" with a small journalistic "tail" on it. That tail finds it very difficult to wag the dog. Not only that, but by its very nature, since you have to use the tools of television, you get dragged onto the television stage and find yourself a little bit part of that entertainment world, fighting it all the time and yet forced to use lighting and makeup and tape editing and all the rest of the things that television does.

It takes strong journalists—and, thank heavens, we have a good many of them—to hold the position of reality when they are having to share a stage with a basically unreal world of entertainment. But, obviously, television is basically an entertainment medium.

Mr. Shaw. You made the point in your testimony that you would like to see a television station say that they aren't going to have a camera in a certain place because of the problems it would cause. I'm afraid—and I am sure you would agree—that such a network would probably end up last in the ratings, because everyone would be going around trying to see which one is showing the blood and guts or whatever.

Of course, as you are well aware, we had the problem in my district in Dade County, FL, where we had the riots, and there is no question in my mind at all that the extent of the riots was caused by the extent of the coverage. All you have to do is to take a TV camera into an area where there is unrest and you're going to have rock throwing. It is a very real problem.

Of course, there is no way that we're going to be able to limit it, or would we want to limit it by law, because it is a basic freedom. But, perhaps, the media should bear some responsibility or maybe it does and it has just not been tested, some responsibility to a merchant who has been burned out or to a pedestrian who has been hit with a rock, by the fact that the media itself might have caused that fire to be set or that rock to have been thrown.

Would you care to comment on that?

Mr. Schorr. Well, you are beginning to get close to the area which I had hoped to avoid, which is legal restraints and legal action. I know, for example, I find it very interesting that there is now a lawsuit against the manufacturer of the gun that shot Jim Brady and President Reagan on the grounds that you are responsible for your product. Clearly, every citizen and every company in our society bears a certain responsibility for what it does. Further than that, I would really not wish to go.

Mr. Shaw. Thank you.

I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Hughes. The gentleman from Florida, Mr. Smith.

Mr. Smith. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My apologies, Mr. Schorr. I would certainly echo the comments of my colleague from Florida. You are a very distinguished gentleman, and I have had the pleasure of watching you over the years.

However, while I have had the pleasure of watching you and other of your colleagues, I have also had the displeasure of watching television over the years, and it seems to me that we have fallen into a pattern on television. I single that out as a very unique media because as you indicated, it is a media that is mostly entertainment as differentiated from newspapers, magazines and radio, which are more news-oriented and less susceptible to having their product moved by virtue of sponsorship to one philosophical bent or another or one particular form or another.

I am curious about your comments in answer to some of these questions. To some degree they differ slightly from those of your prepared text—and I apologize for not being here during the time that you gave the text. You have alluded to the fact that maybe the media should have covered one person and some news editor or news reporter should have had the guts to stand up and say "Look, that was only 1 man and there were 50 of the others," maybe we should cover the 50 and leave the 1 aside, or——

Mr. SCHORR. Not leave the one aside.

Mr. SMITH. Or give the one the second that he or she deserves in the context of percentage of what it was that all the other people were doing.

I am curious as to whether or not that could ever be achievable in terms of what people who are on television have to deal with as the outside motivating factors of sponsorship, ratings, and the like. I would like to know whether you feel that could ever be achieved, because then I went to jump to the other media, which I feel hold almost as much blame and yet can't use any of the shields that television might have in the way of excuse.

Mr. SCHORR. Mr. Smith, with all due respect, I think you exaggerate the effects of sponsorship. That may have been true 20 or 30 years ago, that television stations and networks were so dependent on sponsorship that sponsors might affect their decisions. That is hardly ever true today.

Ratings are a very important influence. I can't remember any recent case where any station or any network did anything for fear of a sponsor. Sponsors on the whole don't dare any more to try to intervene, and if they did, they would just lose their commercials and the space would be taken on the air by others. Ratings are a somewhat different thing. Ratings are very important to stations and networks and they fight very hard for them.

My point in saying this is, if you follow the line of least resistence, if you follow a kind of aggressions more in which the worst tends to drive out the best, we will get what we get on television both on entertainment and sometimes, at least locally, in television news.

I suggest, however, that the public is at a point where it can create different incentives. Stations and networks are very responsive to organized groups of Americans, to the mail they get and to the telephone calls they get. In the case of the Hanafi Muslims seige here, some stations were criticized for the way they behaved and they are not likely to behave that way again. They don't like being in trouble in the community. I think that the countervailing values to ratings can be set up by public pressure, not by legislative and not by governmental pressure, but by the way it is done in the American way. Americans get mad at things and they say "we don't want you contributing to violence" and they let stations know it. I think stations react to that.

Mr. SMITH. Let's take that one step further, because the media is certainly not limited to television. We have news in the print media and on the radio, which I don't think anyone has ever accused of inciting to riot—not in recent times anyway. At least to some degree we are saddened by the fact that most of our young people don't seem to read newspapers all that much.

If you look, as the chairman indicated, and as Mr. Sawyer indicated, in the newspapers—let's leave television aside—you are very hard pressed to find written media coverage of the issues in the mayoral race in Chicago. Everything was devoted on how Mr. Washington was being politically abused by some of the local political institutions or what Mr. Epton was doing in terms of his problems about investigations of his law firm. I read the newspaper almost every day and I couldn't find, even in the newspaper, what the issues were.

Isn't there anybody out there who is willing to try to redirect the news at all to the areas which are probably the most legitimate function of the newspaper—that is, to report ultimately what is going on in terms of what our long-standing political structure thinks ought to be going on? This is what pains me. Even the magazines, they all talked in terms of the tangential issues. Nobody talked about what we in America would expect in a political race—the differences of opinion on how to run the city of Chicago. That's just an example.

Is there any other explanation? There aren't ratings for newspapers. Generally, the local department store will advertise in the newspaper unless it is espousing some radical overthrow of the U.S. Government. Generally, the local department store, the local hardware stores, the tire stores that run their sales, they are in the newspaper. I'm a little depressed by that.

Does that depress you? Does what I say make any sense at all?

Mr. SCHORR. Congressman, it is only with certain hesitation that I cross the constitutional barrier that divides your function from my function to discuss news values. But let me say this, with all respect to those on your side of this barrier, that in almost every case—back at CBS several years ago when I was there conscious efforts were made, because of these kind of pressures, to cover the issues. Walter Cronkite went in and interviewed all the candidates and got their positions on the issues and devotedly, almost doggedly, put them on the air.

One of the troubles is that today, for some reason, when politicians talk about the issues, they don't have much to say. They take a poll and find out what the public wants to hear and get somebody to write a position for them which will sound bold but yet will be very safe. The trouble is, I would like to see somebody on the issues where the politican on the issues really made some news, instead of repeating a safe position that didn't add anything to the public debate.

Mr. SMITH. Mr. Schorr, you are not supposed to make news with the political position on an issue. You're supposed to report it factually. Why do you have to think that you have to make news in stating your position on an issue? That is news. Anytime you come out and say "I think we ought to fix the potholes in the street," why do you have to do it by saying "and we're going to have to take the money out of the grandmothers and widows fund?" That would be news. But the reporting of fixing the potholes is also supposed to be news. That's a position that a person wants to take.

You see, what you have just said seems to me to be the attitude. If it's the ho-hum, mundane stuff, of talking about funding education, or talking about fixing potholes, or increasing the fire department's capacity, it isn't news any more. It's nothing. It's zero. It is the attitude that all the media has—that that is now worthless reportage. That is what bothers me.

Isn't there anyone out there who wants to bring it back to what used to be the traditional value of reportage, and that is, what a candidate says, or when an accident occurs, what the parties have to say about everything, not just the fact that a car blew up, but maybe why the car went off the road in the first place? I mean, doesn't anybody have that lack of timidity? It is very depressing as an average citizen, not as a politician. I am not bleeding this out as a politician at all. I find it to be a quite frustrating process to read the newspapers and read all—and watch television and see all—of the portions of it that try to make something out of something other than what it is, because it might be boring otherwise. That is what pains me.

When you say it is not news to report your position on something, I disagree. I think that is news. I think it is not news to try and portray that in a way that tries to make somebody have an opinion about it. This is what disturbs me.

I sat here and made a casual comment to the chairman while you were responding to Mr. Sawyer's questions, "I think some kind of comment about the whole hearing is the fact that there is no media here at all." He said he had already made that comment and I should bring it up again, so I have. We have hearings on a whole bunch of fancy and lofty subjects in Congress, and many of them are covered very severely by the media. The Immigration Reform bill, a whole bunch of other issues that this committee has sat on, and I am sure when it gets to the full committee all the cameras will be rolling and all the lights will be there and all these things—and it is an important issue. Yet, this, which is an important issue—you have chosen to be here and I think you feel it is fairly important—practically nobody is here covering this at all. TV's and mess are not here. I don't really understand why.

Mr. SCHORR. Isn't it comforting for you to know how little attention a media figure attracts here?

Mr. SMITH. Shall I answer that question? [Laughter.]

Mr. SAWYER. Would the gentleman yield just a moment?

Mr. SMITH. Certainly. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. SAWYER. I just think that the comment the gentleman from Florida was making, that while the media can say they are only a passive conveyor of what, in talking about political campaigns, what the politicians say. You know, you underestimate the intelligence of the average politician if he doesn't know what the media will run. If he says something dealing with the potholes in the street, he knows that is not going to make the media at all. After all, that is the only way we communicate with our potential voters. None of us could go around in anything as big as a congressional district, let alone the city of Chicago, or a State, and talk individually to enough people. You have got to rely on the media to get the issues out.

On the other hand, if you said we're going to fill all the potholes in the street, you would never make any of the news at all. But if you say you're going to take the money from the widows and orphans funds—that wouldn't be a popular thing to say, but you know it would make the media.

Mr. **Schorr**. When you say your opponent is going to do it.

Mr. **Sawyer**. Right; then you would make the media.

Mr. **Hughes**. That's manipulating the media.

Mr. **Sawyer**. As the chairman just mentioned, he was at a meeting at the White House with the President yesterday on some issue, and when he came out the national media were there, and they were interviewing people there and said, you know, "Do you feel the President is being dishonest?" Well, he didn't feel the President was being dishonest, but he was certainly acute enough to know, if he wanted to make national news—and he's a Democrat, you know, so it's not going to be suicidal to him—he could have said, "Yes, I think he is being dishonest——

Mr. **Hughes**. That would be the end of our crime bill. [Laughter.]

Mr. **Sawyer**. He would have been on the national media right away because that's what they're looking for. Of course, the politicians know that so that they, in effect, encourage what they criticize. They are not quite as passive as you would have us believe.

Mr. **Schorr**. I recognize what you are saying, Mr. Sawyer, and I guess what I will have to say is the relationship of the news media to politics bears roughly the same relationship as television to crime. It is a process of mutual manipulation.

Mr. **Hughes**. Just to pick up, I don't entirely agree with the suggestion that the media does attempt to discriminate. That hasn't been my experience They have been very balanced, by and large. The great overwhelming bulk of the news people that I have dealt with have been very balanced. I have had opponents over the years who have just made outrageous statements when they had no chance of winning the election, just to try to get the media attention, knowing that that's what you had to do to get attention, and had the media report that in a very balanced fashion, with a response, and even at times with some editorial comment suggesting how outrageous the statement is. So, I don't subscribe to the view that the media doesn't assume some responsibility in an attempt to be balanced, because I think that they do.

Mr. Schorr, back in 1976, in an article you wrote for the Washingtonion magazine, you alluded to the testimony of David Rintells, then president of the Writers Guild in Los Angeles. Mr. Rintells stated that the networks not only approve violence on TV, they have been known to request and inspire it.

We are going to pursue that line of questioning with other witnesses, but I wonder if you would give us your opinion on that score.

Mr. **Schorr**. Well, I know David Rintels and have a lot of respect for him when he was then head of the Screenwriters Guild and he spoke with great passion. As often happens when you speak with great passion, it came out in a very vigorous way. But I am sure there was some truth to it.

This is a field which I know less about. We are now talking entertainment, which I have tried not to make my field. And yet

David Rintels undoubtedly had some truth when he said back in 1976 that as you write scrips for television, then, at least—I think there have been some changes—that you find that scripts with more violence tend to get selected for production over scripts which didn't have violence. That was his point and I think his point was valid.

Mr. HUGHES. Finally, in the Washingtonian, you quote E.B. White in 1938 as saying:

> I believe television is going to be the test of the modern world, and that in this new opportunity to see beyond the range of our vision we shall discover a new and unbearable disturbance of the modern peace or a saving radiance in the sky. We shall stand or fall by television—of that I am quite sure.

In what direction are we heading, Mr. Schorr?

Mr. SCHORR. I haven't seen a lot of saving radiance.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you. We appreciate your testimony. It has been very insightful. In the context of your testimony, the question of the Chicago race I think points out some very interesting areas that perhaps we will explore with the two candidates for mayor, the new mayor and the challenger, Mr. Epton.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SHAW. Mr. Chairman, may I make an observation before the witness leaves?

Mr. HUGHES. The gentleman from Florida.

Mr. SHAW. Perhaps you, sir, as well as the other people that report the news faithfully to us each evening are nothing more than a reflection of us; that is, that you are reporting the news that we want to hear and what we are curious about. Perhaps when we criticize you, the media, we are really criticizing ourselves as citizens for having a thirst for that type of knowledge, rather than a thirst to know about the potholes and the financial condition of the city of Chicago.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HUGHES. The next witnesses will be a panel consisting of David Pearl, Ph.D., Chief of Behavioral Sciences Research Branch, National Institute of Mental Health; Thomas D. Cook, who is professor, department of psychology, Northwestern University; Linda S. Lichter, Ph.D., graduate program in science, technology and public policy, George Washington University; and Leonard D. Eron, professor of psychology and research professor of the social sciences, University of Illinois at Chicago.

I wonder if the panel would come forward at this time.

We have your statements which, without objection, will be made a part of the record in full. I do hope that you will be able to summarize as best you can for us.

Why don't we start with you, Dr. Pearl, since you are the first one, unless you have agreed upon some other order of testifying.

Dr. PEARL. That's fine.

Mr. HUGHES. Dr. Pearl, we are delighted to have you with us this morning.

STATEMENTS OF DAVID PEARL, PH.D., CHIEF, BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES RESEARCH BRANCH, DIVISION OF EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH PROGRAMS, NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH; THOMAS D. COOK, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY, URBAN AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC POLICY, NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY; LINDA S. LICHTER, PH.D., GRADUATE PROGRAM IN SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND PUBLIC POLICY, GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY; AND LEONARD D. ERON, PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY AND RESEARCH PROFESSOR OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO

Dr. PEARL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to testify before this committee on what behavioral science and mental health research have learned regarding television's influences on viewer behaviors and functioning, particularly as these relate to aggressiveness, violence, and antisocial acts.

The research mission of the National Institute of Mental Health is to increase knowledge regarding factors and processes which underlie mental and behavioral disorders or which contribute to mental health. Studies of the development, determinants, and maintenance of behavior have been one major aspect of the NIMH programs. For this reason, the Institute was selected to provide the setting and staff during the 1969–71 period when the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior functioned and published its well-known report. This assessed the relationship of television watching and the violent behaviors of young viewers.

Following that report in 1972, the Institute was given the lead responsibility within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, now the Department of Health and Human Services, for further research on television's behavioral influences. The Institute since then has supported a small number of key studies on media behavioral influences judged through peer review as being scientifically meritorious. It also has served as a catalyst for other research.

The 1972 report of the Surgeon General's committee confirmed the pervasiveness of television. It focused on aggressiveness and violent behavior. Its major conclusion was that there was fairly substantial experimental evidence for a short-run causation of aggression among some children viewing televised violence, and less evidence from field studies regarding long-term causal effects. Since then, a large number of studies regarding media influences have been conducted in a very broad range of behavioral topics.

Researchers suggested in mid-1979 to the then Surgeon General, Dr. Richmond, that it would be worthwhile to collect, review, and synthesize this expanded knowledge and to determine its import. The Surgeon General agreed and encouraged the National Institute of Mental Health to undertake the project, which then was initiated at the end of 1979.

I directed it with the aid of a small distinguished group of consultants, who included behavioral scientists, mental health researchers, child development experts, and communications media specialists. It was our view that we wanted to conduct this project as a scientific enterprise and to call the shots as the evidence indicated.

Comprehensive and critical evaluations of the scientific literature on numerous aspects of television's behavioral influences were commissioned from leading researchers. The update project group assessed and integrated these contributions, as well as additional pertinent data.

Most of the studies considered involved children and youth. These assessments of the current state of knowledge were published in 1982 by the National Institute of Mental Health as a two-volume report titled "Television and Behavior—10 Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties." Only a part of the report is given over to televised violence and potential influences on viewers. The unanimous consensus reflected in the report—I must emphasize here, the unanimous consensus—is that there is a general learning effect from television watching which is important in the development and functioning of many viewers.

While television also has potential for influencing socially desirable behaviors, the learning and expressing of aggressive behaviors or attitudes on these also are major aspects of its influence. The unanimous consensus embodied in the report was that the convergence of findings from a sizable number of studies, on balance, indicated a causal connection between televised violence and later aggressive behavior. The conclusions reached in the 1972 Surgeon General's report thus were strengthened by the more recent research. Although this area of research is difficult, our certainty has been increased by this followup.

The report also concluded that television effects were not just due to its programmatic content, but in part may also be due to the structure or the form of the medium. This includes such aspects as the program pace, the action level, and camera effects, which may stimulate higher physiological and emotional arousal levels in the viewer, and thus a greater readiness to respond aggressively under appropriate instigation or cues.

Now, the majority of both experimental and the more naturalistic field studies coalesce and are mutually supportive in indicating that there is a linkage between the viewing of televised violence and aggressive behaviors. Most behavior scientists who have studied the question agree in this regard. I want to repeat that. Most behavioral scientists who have studied this question agree in this regard.

Early studies suggested that it was mostly those individuals who preferred and were attracted to action programs involving violence who were susceptible to subsequent increased aggressiveness. More recent research, however, has pointed to the critical relationship between the extent of viewing violent programs and later aggressiveness, rather than to the initial attitudinal preference for such programs. This means that persons who are heavy viewers of such programs can be influenced even though they didn't start out having a liking for such programs.

It is important here to stress that the empirical support for a causal linkage does not mean that all aggressive or violent behaviors in the real world are television-influenced. Some critics of the NIMH report have misunderstood this. The causes of behavior are complex and determined by multiple factors. No single factor, exclusively by itself, probably makes a person seriously aggressive or antisocial. Under some psychological, social or environmental circumstances, television may exert little or no influence. But with other conditions, it can play a very highly important role in shaping behavior style when and how violence, aggressiveness, or other antisocial behavior gets expressed.

Some also have discounted potential effects shown by past research on the grounds that even if real, these are still not large enough to be meaningful in a practical sense. But it is appropriate to point out that even comparatively small effects can have a major social significance. Even if only one of a thousand viewers is influenced—and it may very well be more than that—the huge audiences for many programs would still generate a sizable number who are influenced in some way.

Consider also cumulative effects thoughout the year for those who watch extensively. Even if only a small number of antisocial incidents are precipitated in any community, these may be sufficient to be disruptive to impair the quality of life for citizens of that community.

Even in this difficult area of research, we can identify four kinds of television-related effects. Most research has dealt with the first two that I will mention.

The first involves the direct imitation of observed television violence and antisocial behavior. This includes the so-called copycat behavior, in which the showing of violent or antisocial acts seems sometimes to have a contagious effect in bringing about imitative behaviors. We know a considerable amount about this kind of imitational behavior.

The second type of effect is when television violence triggers off or instigates aggressive acts which the viewer had learned previously and are not just replications of what the viewer had just watched the hour before or the day before.

The last two effects to be mentioned concern the psychological effects on some viewers of a diet of heavy watching of televised violence. The third of the four effects involves the shaping of attitudes in which viewers may begin to accept a higher level of violence or antisocial behavior in their lives as normal. To repeat, in which viewers may begin to accept a higher level of violence or antisocial behavior in their lives as normal.

This frame of mind is apt to result in a greater tolerance of violence when it occurs, a decrease in empathy and an increase of apathy relative to those who are victimized.

The fourth type of influence relates to the possible fanning of viewer fearfulness of being victimized. For example, the violence profiles issued yearly by the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication have indicated that a disproportionate percentage of television-portrayed victims are the powerless or have-not individuals in our society, including older citizens. Viewers then may experience fear and anxiety on the basis of identification or perceived similarity to such victims. Studies by the Annenberg School have found generally that heavy viewers of television tend to overestimate the amount of violence and danger facing them. Other surveys have typically also shown that older citizens are heavy viewers of television. Programming then which potentially exacerbates expectations of violence and trauma in these viewers could be considered as leading to unwanted effects for some of the elderly, such as heightening of anxiety and increasing the fear of being away from the home.

I would like to conclude with a caution, a caveat. The research evidence is based on studies of groups and does not permit one to make a definitive prediction that a particular individual is violence-prone or antisocial just on the basis of the heavy viewing of televised violence. Whether such a heavy viewer will act aggressively or be antisocial will also depend on other aspects of his background, and the existence of environmental instigators on restraints or his acting out. The extensive watching of televised violence is an important consideration—I have to stress that it is a very important consideration for many. But still, it is only one of several factors in the equation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee.

[The statement of David Pearl follows:]

STATEMENT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

by Dr. David Pearl
National Institute of Mental Health

I am pleased to have this opportunity to testify before the Subcommittee on Crime of the Committee on the Judiciary and share with you what behavioral science and mental health research learned regarding television's influences on viewer behaviors and functioning, particularly as these relate to aggressiveness, violence and crime. While there remains much to learn about factors influencing behavior, research has given us a good knowledge about many aspects.

The Institute's research mission is to increase knowledge regarding factors and processes which underlie mental and behavioral disorders or which contribute to mental health. Studies of the development, determinants and maintenance of behavior have been one major aspect of the NIMH programs. Within this context, the Institute over the years has supported or stimulated research on television's behavioral, psychological and psychosocial influences and their mental health aspects. The Institute provided the setting and staff during the 1969-1972 period when the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior functioned and published its well known report (1) which assessed the relationship of television watching and the aggressive and violent behaviors of viewers.

That 1972 report confirmed the pervasiveness of television. Its major conclusion with unanimous concurrence by its members was: "Thus, there is a convergence of the fairly substantial, experimental evidence for a short-run causation of aggression among some children by viewing violence on the screen and much less certain evidence from field studies that extensive violence-viewing precedes some long-run manifestations of aggressive behavior. The convergence of the two types of evidence constitute some preliminary indication of a causal relationship, but a good deal of research remains to be done before one can have confidence in these conclusions." (1)

Following that report, the NIMH was given the lead responsibility within the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), now the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) for further research on television's behavioral effects. Research grant support since then has been provided to a number of projects on media influences which were judged through peer review as being scientifically meritorious. These represent a small fraction of research studies on television influences conducted on a broad range of behavioral topics by investigators who had become convinced of television's emergent importance in American life. Over 80 percent of all publications of research on television influences have appeared in the last decade--over [illegible],500 titles.

Because of the outpouring of research, leading investigators in 1979 suggested the timeliness of an update of the earlier Surgeon General's Report through a critical assessment and integration of this burgeoning literature. The Surgeon General and the National Institute of Mental Health agreed and the project was initiated in late 1979.

Initially, comprehensive and critical evaluations of the scientific literature on numerous aspects of television's behavioral influences and effects were commissioned from leading researchers. These included one report on what was then an unpublished panel study by the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) social scientists which centered on the topic of the medium and aggressive and violent behavioral effects. Subsequently, the update project group which included a number of distinguished behavioral scientists, mental health researchers, child development experts and communication media specialists, assessed and integrated these contributions as well as additional pertinent data. After extensive discussions, the update group achieved consensus on the current state of knowledge, gaps, and continuing research needs. This integration and assessment is contained in an extensive, documented report, released in 1982 as Volume 1 of a two volume publication. Volume 2, also published, incorporated edited versions of the state of knowledge papers commissioned earlier (2,3).

Only a part of the report is given over to considerations of televised violence and potential influences on viewers. A major part of the report covers other considerations such as television's health promoting possibilities and such other aspects as: cognitive and emotional influences, prosocial or socially desirable behaviors, creativity and fantasy, socialization and conceptions of social reality, television and the family, educational achievement and critical television viewing skills.

The unanimous consensus reached by the update group was that there is a general learning effect from television which is important in the development and functioning of many viewers. Television has become virtually a universal influence in our society. Practically every American home has a television set; many have multiple sets. The medium is a formidable educator whose effects are both pervasive and cumulative. One can no longer maintain the illusion that television is merely innocuous entertainment and just a casual part of everyday life. Surveys have indicated that each person, on the average, watches television for approximately 25 to 30 hours a week. Some, of course, watch much more. Viewing times for individuals may range from one or two to many hours daily and some keep the set on all day long. One survey found that for large numbers of people, television ranked third among all activities (after sleep and work) in the number of hours devoted to it.

This general learning influence, of course, has been implicitly subscribed to by the broadcast industry with respect to the effectiveness of television advertising.

While the medium has potential for influence on socially desirable behaviors, the learning and expression of aggressive or violent behaviors, or attitudes on these, also are major aspects of its influence. The NIMH update group agreed that the convergence of findings from a sizeable number of studies, on balance, supported the inference of a causal connection between televised violence and later aggressive behavior. The conclusions reached in the 1972 Surgeon General's Report thus have been strengthened by the more recent research and the processes by which aggressive behavior is produced have been examined further. The update group also concluded that television's influence or effects on aggressive behaviors are not attributable solely to its programmatic content but may, in part, be due also to the structure or form of the medium. This includes such aspects as program pace, action level, and camera effects which stimulate higher physiological and emotional arousal levels in the viewer, and thus a greater readiness to respond aggressively under appropriate instigation or cues.

The reliability of results from basic laboratory or experimental studies on television influences generally are well established and provide more readily acceptable causal inferences than are data obtained outside the laboratory. But laboratory studies have come under some questioning as to their generalizability to real life aggression and violence. Field studies, on the other hand, are more naturalistic and realistic though they are less precise and less interpretable regarding causal relationships. Longitudinal studies of subjects over a number of years and investigations regarding the effects on communities of the introduction of television are among those field studies which give significant data on television influences.

In common with experimental research, the majority of observational or field studies and surveys indicate also that there is a significant positive correlation between television viewing and aggressive behaviors. The strength of this relationship differs between field studies on the basis of differences in subject samples and procedures for assessing both viewing and aggressive behaviors. But there can be little doubt that experimental and field findings coalesce and are strongly supportive of the positive relationship between the viewing of televised violence and subsequent aggressive behaviors.

Several of the earlier studies, prior to 1972, reported data indicating that it was viewer preference for television action programs involving violence which was causally linked to later aggressiveness. More recent research, however, has pointed to the critical relationship between the extent of television viewing of violent programming and aggressive behavior rather than to the attitudinal preference for such programs. Thus heavy viewers of such programs can be influenced even though they do not have an a priori preference for violent portrayals. The possibility that there is a bidirectional causal effect also must be considered. The path analyses of data from recent longitudinal coordinated studies in the United States and Finland (4,5) did support such an interaction. These investigators concluded that extensive viewing of televised violence by children instigates greater aggressiveness and that this effect does not occur only for those initially highly aggressive. Reciprocally, then, for children who thus became more aggressive, an increased interest in and preference for programs with violence and high action is engendered. Data from this project's large sample of American children indicates too that the positive linkage holds for primary school girls as well as for boys, contrary to earlier findings in the literature that such a relationship held only for boys. Considering the research of the past decade in this country, it is clear that the linkage holds for the entire child-youth spectrum, having been reported for study samples ranging from pre-school through the adolescent years.

Such empirical support for the linkage does not mean, of course, that all aggressive or violent behaviors in the real world are television influences. Some critics of the Report findings have misunderstood this. The causes of behavior are complex and are determined by multiple factors. The viewing of televised violence is only one in a constellation of determinants or precipitating factors involved in antisocial or aggressive behavior. Probably no single factor exclusively by itself makes a person seriously aggressive or antisocial. And certainly, under some psychological, social or environmental circumstances, television may exert little or no easily discernible influence on behavior. But with other conditions, it may play a significant role in shaping behavioral style, when, and how violence, aggressiveness or other antisocial behavior gets expressed. Television viewing also may function as a triggering or releasing mechanism for overt behaviors which otherwise might be inhibited.

Some critics also have discounted the antisocial effects shown by past research on the grounds that such effects or relationships while statistically significant nevertheless are not large enough to be meaningful in a practical sense. But even if it were so, that the extensive watching of televised violence had only a comparatively small effect on viewers, that effect could still be of major social significance. Consider the situation if even only one out of a thousand viewers was affected (there may well be a higher rate). A given prime-time national program with an audience of 15 million would generate a group of 15,000 who were influenced in some way. Consider also the cumulative effects for viewers who watch such programs throughout the year. Even if only a small number of antisocial incidents are precipitated in any community, these often may be sufficient to be disruptive and to impair the quality of life for citizens of that community.

Furthermore, we know that television presentations of various antisocial or violent acts have instigated imitations or what some have called "copy-cat" behaviors. This has occurred for airplane hijacking, and more recently, in an increase of poison threats involving tampering with over-the-counter drugs. Documentary or semi-fictional presentations, as well as fictional dramatic programs and movies on television, have stimulated imitations of antisocial acts or threats of violence. One documented illustration (6) involves reports by airlines in various cities and countries on extortion threats to blow up aircraft through an already implanted pressure sensitive bomb. These were imitative threats which systematically and quickly followed the showing of the television play "Doomsday Flight" in these cities at different times. Prior to the showing of this television drama which involved a similar plot, there had been no extortion threats of this kind in any of these communities. Numerous self-inflicted deaths and woundings involving both adults and adolescents also have been reported all over the country at different times following the showing in the victims' communities of the movie on television of the "Deerhunter." This has a prominent "Russian Roulette" episode.

Four kinds of television related effects can be identified. The first involves the direct imitation of observed violence. This is the effect that first springs to mind when one thinks about television violence. There are many examples of the learning and overt imitations of viewed violent or aggressive actions. The medium often has provided tutoring or training on how to do it—how to burgularize, physically manhandle an opponent, and so forth. One example reported in a newspaper involved the arrest of a youth in his first attempt to break open a pay-phone coin box. He had learned the technique from a television crime show which, however, had failed to explain that such phones had a built-in silent alarm system. The outcome of this episode was a criminal labeling of the youth and jailing with possible long lasting consequences.

A second type of effect occurs when the television violence serves to instigate or trigger off overt acts which are not imitations of what had been immediately observed but rather relate to earlier learned aggressive or violent tactics.

The other two effects concern the psychological effects on some viewers of a diet of heavy watching of televised violence. These influences are subtle and insidious and should be of concern.

Viewer habituation or desensitization to the occurrence of violence is a potential outcome. Children especially, but youth and adults too, may learn that violent behavior or aggressive tactics are appropriate under many circumstances. Some who spend significant amounts of time watching programs with high action, violence and antisocial behaviors may begin to assume that these are reflective of a similar rate of such occurrences in the world. Such viewers would learn gradually to accept a higher level of violent or antisocial behavior as being normal. A number of studies with children (e.g., 7,8) have provided data which suggest that the development of this frame of mind or attitude may result in a greater tolerance of violence when it occurs, a decrease of empathy toward others in distress, or an increase in apathy relative to the helping of victims. Two recent studies with adults provide a clear indication of how exposure to films may influence attitudes of greater acceptance of violence against women. Zillmann and Bryant (9) have found from an experimental study that the more extensive the viewing of erotic films, the more significantly affected are the attitudes of viewers on sexuality and dispositions toward women. Viewers of such films in contrast to comparable control subjects became more calloused and less compassionate to hypothetical rape victims. Extensive viewing of these erotic films trivalized and shifted attitudes so that rape became perceived as a less serious crime.

Studies by Donnerstein (10) and Malamuth (11) concerned the effects of films on viewers. Donnerstein found no increase in violent or sexually violent attitudes by men toward women when a neutral or an explicitly sexual film was shown. But both a violent film and even more so a sexually violent film resulted in a considerable increase in viewer willingness to administer pain to women and to report an increased likelihood of raping a woman. Malamuth, on the basis of several studies, concluded that violent, non-sexual films of the kind often appearing on television did increase the acceptance of aggression against women.

The fourth type of influence involves the possible impact of televised violence or antisocial acts on viewer fearfulness. There is considerable evidence that television is influential in the learning of behaviors other than aggression and in the shaping of viewer knowledge and attitudes. As one aspect, some viewers may learn to identify with portrayed victims of televised violence. The violence profiles issued yearly by Gerbner and his colleagues (12,13) have indicated that a disproportionate percentage of television-portrayed victims are the powerless or have-not individuals in our society, including older citizens. Viewers then, may experience fear and apprehension on the basis of identification or perceived similarity to such victims. Gerbner has reported generally that heavy viewers, as contrasted to light viewers, tend to overestimate the amount of violence and danger facing them (12,13). To the extent that this is a valid finding, it should have pertinence for many viewers, particularly the elderly. Surveys typically indicate that older persons are heavy users of television for entertainment, as time markers, and for contact with what is going on in the world. This, in large measure, is due to their decreased physical mobility and to their often restricted incomes. Crime statistics reveal that there is a realistic basis for anxiety concerning possible victimization for large numbers of older citizens in cities, many living marginally. Television programming which exacerbates expectations of violence and trauma thus could be considered as having unwanted mental health effects such as heightening anxiety over being victimized and increasing the fear of being away from one's home. With a growing number of elderly in our population, such effects increasingly will demand attention.

A number of studies, mostly experimental, have delineated those viewing circumstances where televised violence was most likely to influence behavior. Aggressiveness is most likely to be emulated when:

(1) it pays off: that is, the actor or model solves his problem, achieves his goal, or satisfies his need;

(2) it is not punished: there is no retribution, censure, or unfavorable consequence to the actor as a result of the use of violence;

(3) it is shown in a justifying context; that is, the violence, threat or injury meted out is justified by the events and the victim merited such behavior. This typically characterizes police shows;

(4) it is socially acceptable: the aggressive behaviors are presented as acceptable to the portrayed TV players in the context of the social practices and attitudes characterizing the setting and plot of the program. An example would be the hanging of a rustler in a wild west program;

(5) it appears realistic rather than being seen as a segment of a fictitious program;

(6) it appears motivated by a deliberate intent to injure the victim;

(7) it is expressed under conditions, cues, or circumstances similar to those experienced or lived in by the viewer; and,

(8) it is perpertrated by a model who the viewer perceives as similar to himself.

Just as media influenced behaviors can be facilitated, there also are aspects which serve to inhibit acting out.

(1) retribution and punishment following violence—a clear indicator that crime does not pay;

(2) a sequential showing of the destructive and painful consequences of aggression; and

(3) reminders that such behaviors are contrary to ethical or moral principles.

A number of field studies of the last decade involving children and youth deserve special attention. The longitudinal study reported by Lefkowitz et al (14) in 1972 was a key study leading to the Surgeon General's Committee conclusions. It found that preferences of eight-year-old children for watching television violence assessed in 1960 contributed to the development of aggressive habits as measured ten years later in 1970 when subjects were 18 years old (15). A followup on these subjects now that they are in their early 30s currently is being made.

Singer and Singer (16) in two short-term longitudinal studies followed middle-class and lower-socioeconomic class three and four year olds and assessed both their television viewing and behavior at four different times. Multivariate analyses led the researchers to conclude in both studies that watching violence on television was a cause of heightened aggressiveness.

McCarthy and colleagues in 1975 (17) came to the same conclusion as a result of a five-year study of 732 children. Several kinds of aggressive behaviors, including conflict with parents, fighting, and delinquency proved positively associated with amount of television viewing.

Greenberg in 1975 (18) found correlations between violence viewing and aggressive behaviors in a sample of London school children to be very similar to those reported for American children.

In a Canadian study reported by Williams (19), aggressive behaviors of primary school children in a small community were assessed before and after television was introduced. These data were compared with that for children of two other towns which already had access to television. Increases in both verbal and physical aggression occurred after television was introduced and was significantly greater here than in the two comparison communities.

Huesmann, Lagerspetz and Eron (4) collected data on 758 first and third grades for each of 3 years through an overlapping longitudinal design which then provided data for grades 2 to 5. Similar data was collected on 220 children in Finland. Analyses revealed that violence viewing was related to concurrent aggression and significantly predicted aggression levels several years later for boys in both countries and for girls in the United States. Both the frequency with which violence was viewed and the extent of violence in the programs watched contributed to the causal relationship.

A further study by Huesmann and colleagues (20) involved 169 first and third grade children who had a high exposure to television violence. Experimental techniques aimed at changing children's attitudes about the realism of television violence and whether watching television violence was harmful resulted in a significant reduction in the propensity of these children to act aggressively. This did not occur for similar children who did not receive these interventions. The Investigators conclude that the success of these interventions could not occur if the violence viewing-aggression causal relationships were spurious or due to some third factor.

Adolescents were the subjects of a study reported by Hartnagel, Teevan, and McIntyre (21). In this, they found a significant though low correlation between violence-viewing and aggressive behaviors.

A noteworthy research project by Belson (22,23) supported by the Columbia Broadcasting System concerned 1650 teenage boys, 13-16 years of age. These boys were evaluated for violent behavior, attitudes, sociocultural background, and exposure to television violence. After being divided into two groups on the basis of amount of exposure to televised violence, the lighter and heavier exposees were equated on the basis of a sizeable number of personal characteristics and background variables. The results strongly supported Belson's hypothesis that long-term exposure increased the degree to which boys engage in serious violent behaviors such as burglary, destruction of property, infliction of personal injuries, attempted rape, etc. Belson reports that boys with heavy exposure to televised violence were 47 percent more likely than boys with light exposure to commit the above acts, and were eleven percent more likely to commit violent acts in general. The reverse hypothesis that violent boys were more likely to watch violent television programs was tested and did not hold up. Belson also reports that the viewing of certain program types seemed more likely than others to lead to serious behavioral offenses. These included programs involving physical or visual violence in close personal relationships, programs with gratuitous violence not germane to the plot, realistic fictional violence, violence in a good cause, and violent westerns.

In a striking contrast, Milavsky and his colleagues in a National Broadcasting Company panel study (24) concluded differently. They collected data at several points of time over a 3 year period for 2400 elementary school children and from 800 teenaged high school boys in two cities. Peer nominations of aggression were collected for the elementary school children while the teenagers gave self-reports. The results obtained through the use of a recently developed model for causal analysis (Lisrel IV computer program) showed that there were short-term small positive correlations between viewing measures and aggressive behavior taken at the same point of time. They did not find any long-term effects and they concluded that short-term effects did not cumulate and produce stable patterns of aggressive behavior in the real world.

The seeming excellence of this study's data and analysis would seem to pose a serious challenge to the conclusions of the NIMH report regarding a causal influence. However, this study was considered by the NIMH update group which concluded unanimously that, on balance, the research evidence supported the causal inference. The fact that a negative finding regarding the existence of a phenomenon or a relationship customarily is accorded less weight than are positive findings was a consideration--assuming that the studies generating positive findings were well designed and rigorous. Logically, one cannot definitively prove the "null hypothesis." There may be various reasons for a study's negative finding other than the non-existence of what is being studied. Indeed, the full appropriateness of the analytical model used in this study has been questioned. A reanalysis by Cook (25) led him to conclude that the NBC study conclusions were faulty and that a more tenable conclusion from the data was that television violence may well increase aggression, along with other factors, in children from 7 to 16 years of age.

A recently published study (26) provides an additional finding which is consistent with the thesis that television is a potent influence on viewer behaviors. This study used interrupted time series data to examine how the introduction of television in American cities at different times affected FBI crime indicators. The research was possible because television reception by communities throughout the country began at different times. This artificial staggering resulted from a Federal Communications Commission freeze on new broadcasting licenses between late 1949 and mid-1950. Areas receiving television before the freeze could then be compared at different times for levels of crime with communities only provided television after the freeze. Sophisticated analyses did not reveal a consistent effect for all crimes but did show that the introduction of television conclusively increased larcenies and less definitively, auto thefts. The authors believed that these increases were probably largely due to attitudinal and motivational changes. Their analysis of early television programming indicated that these were most likely due to the arousal of consumption appetites for many young viewers by the portrayal of middle class life styles and the heavy advertising of consumption goods.

A caveat is in order as I conclude this sampling of important research studies. The research evidence is based on studies of groups and does not permit one at this time to make a definitive prediction that a particular individual is violence prone or anti-social just on the basis of heavy viewing of televised violence. As indicated earlier, behaviors are complex and multidetermined. Television influences are important but there are other potential influences at work. Whether a particular heavy television viewer will act aggressively or be antisocial will also depend on other aspects of his background and the existence of environmental instigators or restraints on his acting out. The extensive watching of televised violence has significant influence on many viewers and is important, but yet, is only one of several factors in the equation.

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Mr. HUGHES. Thank you, Dr. Pearl.

What we will do is hear from all the witnesses and then we will question at the conclusion of all the testimony.

Dr. Cook.

Professor COOK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and committee members.

Last November I was asked by a committee of the National Research Council of the National Academy of Sciences to review the research on television and violence, paying particular attention to the NIMH report that is being discussed here today. I did so, looking at all the literature, paying special attention to two naturalistic studies that have recently been completed, one by Milavsky and his colleagues at the NBC network, and another by Huesmann and Professor Eron at the University of Illinois.

These studies were special because they lasted for 3 years and involved the repeated measurement of children's aggressiveness and television watching.

They are interesting because, despite the differences in sponsorship, they reached very comparable findings. As I interpret the findings, and as I interpreted them to the committee, they were twofold: First, watching violence on television is associated with changes in aggressiveness that are not due to the initial aggressiveness level of children. The second finding is that the change in aggressiveness was larger the longer the time period over which children had been watching violence on television.

Now, the crucial issue is whether these relationships are, indeed, causal. The research by Huesmann and Eron attempted to probe this by looking at alternative known causes of aggressiveness, and when they entered those into their analyses, they could not make the relationship between watching television violence and changes in aggressiveness disappear. When Milavsky and his colleagues did the same thing, in all of their analyses except one, the relationship between television watching and changes in aggressiveness, also did not disappear. For a number of reasons, outlined in more detail in my testimony, that one particular analysis is flawed and a better analysis was conducted by Huesmann, using more appropriate measures of the socioeconomic status of the home. That also failed to show the relationship between television and violence disappearing.

I am also disposed to see the relationship as causal because, in a large number of laboratory experiments where causal relationships are easy to demonstrate, it has been shown that watching filmed violence leads to increases in instability and boisterousness among children. The laboratory is, of course, the wrong setting since we we don't want to generalize to laboratory experiments. However, the laboratory offers a clear causal demonstration with ordinary children.

Also Mr. Schorr spoke to the rare cases of imitative violence in our society, where somewhat abnormal people have copied events that they have seen on television and have a few days later committed kidnapings, hijackings, and the like. Here is also clear evidence of a causal connection in the right setting, the real world, but with the wrong group of people in the sense that they are certainly not typical of the mainstream United States.

So I am prepared to conclude that the relationship between television violence and changes in aggression is, in fact, a causal relationship. However, two caveats have to be introduced immediately. The first is that by conventional social science criteria the size of that causal relationship, however consistent it may be across children from many different backgrounds, is small, if not very small. Of the causes of violence in our society, I would not think that television is one of the major ones, at least not over the 3-year time period studied in the research to date.

Now, what is special about television violence, of course, is that, technically at least, something can be done about it. It is much more difficult to do anything about most of the other causes of violence in our society.

The second caveat is that most of the studies of children—these large samples of children from different home backgrounds—have measured aggressiveness and violence as pushing, shoving, using strong language and the like, what some commentators would call incivility and boisterousness rather than inflicting physical harm. The crucial issue, to which I believe Professor Eron will speak later, is to what extent these measures of boisterousness and incivility predict to getting into trouble with the criminal justice system many years later.

I am prepared, therefore, to conclude from reviewing the literature that there is a small, consistent generalized causal impact, but it is small.

There is a second issue involving television and crime that is worth raising. Most of the scholarly debate is about the effects of television on violence. There is beginning to surface some evidence that television may affect larcenies and perhaps auto theft, crimes of property transfer. The evidence is, in part, historical, in that when television was still being introduced into the United States between 1949 and 1952 the FCC froze the issuance of new station licenses. That meant that some towns and cities could not get television that wanted it.

Thirty-four towns and cities throughout the United States were studied which had television before the FCC freeze. It was shown that when the television saturation of households exceeded 50 percent—closer on the average to 70 or 80 percent—larcenies increased by more than 5 percent. When a different set of 34 towns and cities—again all across the United States—finally got television after the freeze was lifted, there also, when saturation was way over 50 percent, larcenies increased by more than 5 percent. The same thing happened when you studied, not towns, but States that got television sooner versus States that got television later.

Now, these data are from one set of investigators only. They are obviously historical and don't necessarily apply to the 1980's. Also, we don't understand why there is a relationship between television saturation and larcenies going up in the communities, with perhaps auto thefts also going up. There is no evidence though that television saturation affected assaults or burglaries.

Now, what is important about that study is, I think, two things: First, the measure of crime used was the uniform crime reports of the FBI, one of the standard measures used in our society for monitoring the incidence of crime. The second thing to note is that if one wants to look at television and crime, then one has to do more than look at television and its causal links to violence. Television is about consumption. Not everybody can consume equally well and not everybody consumes at the levels portrayed in advertising and on shows. There is therefore the possibility of a causal link between television and crimes of larceny.

Thank you.

[The statement of Thomas Cook follows:]

Testimony before The Subcommittee
on Crime of the House Committee on Judiciary

presented by

Thomas D. Cook, Professor of Psychology, Urban Affairs and Public Policy

April 13, 1983

The core of my testimony is contained in Appendices I and II that I want briefly to summarize in order to make two major points. First, that over a three-year period viewing violence on television increases the incivility of children from a wide range of home backgrounds; and second, that when it was first introduced in the late 1940's and early 1950's, television was associated with an increase in larcenies of more than 5% as measured by FBI Uniform Crime Statistics.

With respect to the first point, after reviewing the literature on television violence and aggression by children, paying particular attention to recent three-year studies by Milavsky et al. conducted for NBC and by Huesmann et al. conducted with funds from NIMH, I am willing to conclude on the basis of the striking similarity in data patterns between the studies that: (a) viewing violence on television causally contributes to the aggressiveness of children, as measured by the investigators; and (b) that the effect of television violence on aggression is larger the longer the time period over which aggression is measured. However, these demonstrated effects are very small in magnitude, and it is not likely that three years of viewing violence on TV is a major cause of violence in our society. Over longer periods the effects may be larger, but we do not know that. Also, it is worth noting that the measures of aggression by children reflect more boisterousness and incivility than the inflicting of physical harm that many people in our society consider to be central to definitions of children's violence or aggressiveness. The crucial issue is how the measures used in the research I reviewed relate to violence in later life. I believe that Professor Eron will speak to this, with data over a 20 year period that he interprets as showing a relationship between incivility in childhood and problems with the law as an adult. I believe that he will also speak to the issue of whether effects are larger with longer time intervals between measures of aggression.

My interpretation of the study by Milavsky et al. conflicts somewhat with the authors' own conclusions. They claim that the relationships they obtained between watching television violence and changes in aggression are artifacts of a social dynamic that impels poorer children both to be heavier watchers of television violence and also to become ever more violent as they grow older when compared to children from more affluent homes. That is, the authors claim that the association between watching violence and changes in aggression may be due to poorer children becoming increasingly more aggressive over time for reasons that have nothing to do with watching television _per se_. For reasons ennumerated in Appendix I, I find their analysis unconvincing because (a) half of the children in their analysis were assigned SES scores equal to the average child in their school rather than to the SES level of their own home; (b) the effects of watching television violence were clear for the majority of girls studied who attended schools that the investigations themselves characterized as "middle class;" and (c) the authors conducted many analyses using different variables to try to make the relationship between television watching and increases in violence disappear. Of the many they tried only SES made the relationships disappear and so it is possible that the disappearance of the relationship may be due to chance. This last possibility is strongly suggested by the most important piece of information of all. When they examined the relationship between watching television violence and changes in agression, Huesmann et al. obtained much the same pattern of small but consistent effects as Milavsky et al. But when Huesmann et al. introduced a child-specific SES measures into their analysis, the relationship between viewing violence and increases in commiting violence did not disappear as it did with the flawed SES measure of Milavsky et al. The evidence to date suggests to me that Milavsky et al. have not demonstrated that the relationship between watching violence on TV and increases in violence are due to differences in home SES level and not due to television watching.

Drawing conclusions about causation always requires judgment and inference. For the reasons mentioned above, I am now willing to conclude that a very small causal relationship is consistently apparent that gets larger the longer the time interval studied. However, the maximal time interval in the studies I reviewed was three years, and most children view violence for longer than this.

The second point I want to make concerns television and its possible effects on FBI measures of larceny, which are crimes primarily involving shoplifting, bicycle thefts, thefts from automobiles, thefts of automobile accessories, and thefts from homes where the perpetrator had lawful reasons for being on the premises. The claim outlined in Appendix II, is that in four out of four tests the introduction of television was associated with about an increase of at least 5% in the larcenies reported to the FBI. The study involved two sets of towns and cities throughout the USA. In the first set of 34 towns and cities, the percentage of homes with a TV set reached over 50% by 1951. In that year, larcencies increased in these towns and cities more than in the control group of cities that did not receive television signals until 1953, when the FCC lifted its freeze on the issuance of new station licenses. After 1953 the second set of 34 cities finally received television, and in 1955 the percentage of homes in them with television was also in excess of 50%. In 1955, larcenies increased by about 10% in the second set of cities that had just gotten TV when compared to the cities that had gotten TV earlier. In other words, larcenies repeatedly increased by more than 5% the year that television saturation of homes increased to a level above 50%.

These results have not yet been independently replicated; nor applied to more recent times. Consequently, my conception of social responsibility impels me to believe that we should treat them as suggestive rather than definitive. Nonetheless, there are some things that probably do not account for the findings.

This effect is not likely to be due to thieves stealing television sets as they became more available in communities that had just gotten TV. First, most sets are presumably stolen in burglaries and not larcenies; second, it is not easy to imagine shoplifting early TV sets which were encased in heavy and bulky consoles; and third it is also difficult to imagine one's children's friends (the major perpetrators of larcenies from homes where lawful entry has been obtained) walking off with heavy consoles.

One scholar has argued to me informally that the effect may be due to poorer persons getting television last in their community and stealing, not because the content of television impelled them to steal, but because they wanted to be able to buy a television set! This explanation may be true, but it has to counter the widespread belief that, in its earliest years, television was associated with individuals visiting neighbors on their block who already had sets. Non-ownership was not the same as non-viewing!

Some have also argued that the association between larceny and the introduction of TV may be due to early police shows making citizens more aware of their duty to report crime, thereby increasing reporting but not criminal behavior per se. This explanation may also be true. But if so, it has to account for the fact that the introduction of television did not affect burglaries or assaults. Why should there be an increase in reporting larcencies but not burglaries or assaults?

My speculation at this time is that the effect, if it is real, may be due to television's presentation of consumption patterns, both in advertisements and the content of entertainment shows. For poorer Americans (a group more likely to commit larceny) TV continually reminds them that they are not part of the mainstream of consumption. Adolescents and young adults (the major perpetrators of larceny among the poor) may react to this marginality as consumers of the things that TV offers and portrays by stealing, for they have not yet learned or accepted the mechanisms which other poor Americans, as they get older, develop in order to reconcile themselves to the lifestyle and consumption patterns they actually experience which fall below the lifestyles and consumption patterns held out by TV as "normal" or "desirable."

In summary, my evidence indicates:

That, over three years, violence on TV has a very small causal impact on boisterouseness and incivility among young children--an effect which gets larger the longer the time period over which hoisterousness and incivility are measured.

That the introduction of television has been associated with increases in the rate of larceny as measured by FBI Uniform Crime Reports. However, the study in question has not yet been independently replicated, and no convincing evidence exists relating the phenomenon either to the 1980's or to the theoretical mechanisms that bring the effect about.

Mr. **Hughes**. Thank you, Professor Cook.

Dr. Lichter.

Dr. **Lichter**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to speak about the context in which much of TV violence occurs, that of crime. For every American who is victimized by crime, several experience it vicariously each night on their television sets. But while cops and robbers are a staple of TV entertainment, we know comparatively little about how TV portrays crime and the law.

To address this issue as part of a larger study of how television portrays American society, my colleagues and I examined the nature of crime and law enforcement on 6 weeks of prime time programs, 263 shows, from the 1980–81 television season. Prime time television creates a fantasy world that is frequently dangerous and violent. Our study identified 417 illegal acts, an average of about 1.7 crimes per series episode. Moreover, lawbreakers on television tended to engage in the most serious and violent crimes to an extent that bears little relation to reality. Every fourth crime shown was a murder; one in six was a violent theft. Overall, a majority of all illegal acts portrayed were crimes of violence.

All of this is in sharp contrast to FBI statistics, showing that most crimes are such mundane offenses as drunk driving, larceny, disorderly conduct and drug abuse. Even serious crime in real life tends to be directed against property rather than persons. But television entertainment largely ignores most aspects of real crime in America, focusing instead on the most serious, violent, and life-threatening offenses.

If prime time crime bears little relation to the genuine article, television criminals are equally far removed from their real life counterparts. TV introduces the viewer to two types of criminals—the professional deviant who leads a life of crime, and the apparent pillar of the community who turns to crime to maintain or better his standard of living. Criminals on TV are usually middle or upper class, white males over the age of 30. As mature adults, they rarely act on impulse. Instead, their lawbreaking is carefully calculated to advance their own interest.

The vast majority of televised crime is predicated on the pure greed of the "haves," who, unlike criminals in real life, are far removed from a culture of poverty. On TV, wealthy characters are over twice as likely to commit crimes as those identified as poor or middle class. Along these lines, the stock criminal type is the businessman whose selfish pursuit of profit leads him into illegal activity. The notorious J.R. Ewing of "Dallas," who, by the way, is currently engaged in illegal oil sales to Cuba, is not the exception, but the rule in TV crime. Businessmen and their underlings account for almost one in four lawbreakers with identifiable occupations on television. They constitute the largest criminal group aside from professional gangsters.

But substantial numbers of criminals are drawn from other sectors of the establishment, as well, including educated professionals and the police themselves. In fact, one criminal in eight was drawn from the ranks of those sworn to uphold the law.

In general, television's crimestoppers handled their jobs in a competent manner, although a significant minority was inept or positively criminal. About one law enforcer in six fell into these categories. Among the "bunglers" familiar to TV viewers are the police officers on the "Dukes of Hazard," while crooked cops include Sheriff Titus Simpie of "Flamingo Road," involved in blackmail and bribery.

Mr. HUGHES. Dr. Lichter, I wonder if we can take a break here. We have a vote in progress and only have about 6 minutes to get to the floor. I am going to recess the subcommittee for about 15 minutes.

[Whereupon, the subcommittee was in recess.]

Mr. HUGHES. The subcommittee will come to order.

Dr. Lichter, you may proceed.

Dr. LICHTER. A major finding of our study was the privileged position of private investigators relative to other law enforcers. In all the programs we viewed, not a single private eye played the "heavy." By contrast, the crooked cop and greedy lawyer provided recurring negative images. More often than not, ordinary law enforcers failed to catch the crook, or played a mere supporting role for the glamorous private eye. The phenomenal success of private eyes such as Magnum, Nero Wolfe, and Dan Tanna of "Vegas" was part of a broader trend involving the need for outside help to enforce the law.

In addition to that quintessential outsider, the private eye, the police often required the help of the private citizen to foil the bad guys. Their assistance did not take the form of merely providing evidence or identifying suspects, but of actually solving the crimes themselves. In brief, effective law enforcement was often the province of the outsider who bypassed the law enforcement establishment.

On television, the police, the Government and the legal profession are often shown as competent, if uninspired, upholders of the law. But these law enforcement professionals often need the help of a lone outsider, the private eye or citizen detective, to bring evildoers to justice. Surprisingly, often on prime time, the insiders break the law and the outsiders enforce it.

I would like to discuss just briefly some possible ways of accounting for the alternate reality that television creates in its portrayal of crime and law enforcement. My colleagues and I believe that program content reflects not only commercial pressures but also the homogeneous social values of Hollywood's creative community. This conclusion is based on the results of our recent study of over 100 top television writers, producers, and industry executives. Three out of four members of the Hollywood elite believe that TV entertainment programs should portray society realistically. In this case, why is crime on television shown in an unrealistic fashion? Presumably, program creators are constrained by audience tastes in the form of Nielsen ratings. Yet ratings cannot account for the entire disparity between real life crime and television's version.

We believe that television's antiauthority portrayal of crime and law enforcement, in part, reflects the social and political alienation of TV's creators. For example, two out of three believed that public officials don't care about the average man. Two out of three believed that the very structure of our society causes alienation. And nearly half think that our institutions need a complete overhaul.

Audiences may like "shoot 'em ups," but the polls show that the average American is not nearly as alienated from social institutions as is the average television producer. Further, members of this Hollywood elite do not regard themselves purely as entertainers, but also as social reformers. Two out of three agreed that TV entertainment should be a major force for social reform. In short, television's creators are not in it just for the money. They also seek to move the audience toward their own vision of the good society.

But, perhaps, this offers a ray of hope for those who would like to see life on television become less violent and crime-ridden, for ironically, most of the writers and producers we surveyed agreed there is too much violence on the programs that they create for America's nightly consumption.

Thank you.

[The statement of Linda Lichter follows:]

Prime-Time Crime: Crime and Law Enforcement in TV Entertainment

Linda S. Lichter & S. Robert Lichter

Prepared for the Subcommittee on Crime of the House Committee on the
Judiciary

April 1983

This report was adapted from Linda S. Lichter and S. Robert Lichter,
Prime-Time Crime
(Washington, D.C.: Media Institute, 1983).

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study examines the nature of crime and law enforcement portrayed in 263 prime-time programs from the 1980-81 television season. It differs from most research on TV violence by focusing on the context in which such violence occurs. We employed a scientific content analysis to analyze types of crimes characteristic of criminals, and portrayals of law enforcement officials. This is part of an ongoing study of how television entertainment has portrayed American society over the past thirty years. Our major findings follow.

First, crime pervades TV entertainment. The study identified 250 criminals, almost one per show. They committed 417 crimes, or 1.7 per show.

Second, crime on TV is far more violent than in real life. Murder is by far the most common crime on television, occurring on average once every two and one half programs. Serious crime on TV is over 200 times more likely to involve murder than in real life, according to FBI Crime Index statistics. Moreover, a majority of TV crimes involve violence, and TV crime is almost twelve times as likely to be violent as real life crime.

Third, TV criminals tend to come from the "establishment". Most prime time lawbreakers are middle or upper-class white males over 30 years old. Businessmen are responsible for more crime than any group other than professional criminals. A stock criminal "type" is the wealthy businessman motivated by greed.

Fourth, most crime is punished, but policemen are rarely the heroes. Almost all TV criminals are caught or thwarted, unlike crime in real life. Private eyes and even private citizens are portrayed as much better crime fighters than the police. A majority of policemen are shown positively, but a substantial minority are either corrupt or incompetent, and heroic cops are rare. Surprisingly often on TV entertainment, the insiders break the law and the outsiders enforce it.

Television's portrayal of crime and law enforcement probably reflects both commercial pressures and the attitudes of Hollywood's creative community. Our survey of top writers and producers revealed that they agree that there is too much violence on television. At the same time, they are strongly critical of political and social authority, and they believe TV entertainment should be a force for social reform.

2. INTRODUCTION

Crime has become a major concern for most Americans. Every yea one household in three is touched by crime. In 1979, the National Crime Survey determined that over 40 million people across the United States were victims of attempted criminal offenses. This included over six million people terrorized by illegal activity involving the threat or act of violence.

Nor is there any safe haven from the possibility of being victimized. Crime cuts across the boundaries of age, sex, race, class and geography. Despite the well documented vulnerability of the elderly to street crime, victimization rates are far higher for young people than for senior citizens. Although women are uniquely vicitimized by crimes such as rape, males are more likely to be the targets of most violent crimes. Nonwhites are more vulnerable to crimes of violence than are whites, but thieves prey on all racial groups about equally. Poor people are most susceptible to violent crime, but the wealthy suffer the highest rate of personal larceny. Finally, while crimes of violence are most prevalent in central cities, suburbanites are just as likely to be plagued by theft. In fact, crimes such as assault, larceny, and burglary are more common in small cities than in major metropolises.

Yet for every American unlucky enough to be touched by crime, several experience crime vicariously every evening on their television sets. Cops and robbers, sheriffs and bandits, private "eyes" and underworld violence have always been staples of television entertainment. For all the attention that has been lavished on televised violence, we know very little about televised crime. Yet, crime provides the context for much of the violent and otherwise antisocial behavior that appears on the small screen. Researchers have found that heavy television watchers perceive the real world as more violent and crime ridden than it actually is. Although the implications of this fact have been disputed, it raises the possibility that televised crime may influence the attitudes and behavior of audiences in ways that are still unknown. [1]

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[1] Gerbner,George, and Gross, Larry. "Living with Television: The Violence Profile." *Journal of Communication*, 1976,26,173-199. For criticism of their findings see Paul Hirsch, "The Scary World of the Nonviewer and Other Anomalies." *Communication Research*, 1980,7,403-456; Paul Hirsch, "On Not Learning from One's Own Mistakes." *Communication Research*, 1981,8,3-37.

We cannot begin to chart the possible effects of crime on television, however, without first understanding the role it plays in entertainment programs. The purpose of this study is to examine systematically the extent and nature of crime and law enforcement as they are portrayed on prime-time television entertainment. Our approach is to combine the social scientific technique of content analysis with relevant illustrations from the programs themselves. We shall focus first on the types of illegal behavior portrayed and then on the portrayals of those who commit crimes. Finally, in a companion piece, we examine the other half of the cops and robbers tandem, the nature of law enforcement on television entertainment.

3. METHOD

Using a six-week program sample of prime-time series from the 1980-81 television season, specific categories were developed to code multiple characteristics of each crime committed, as well as each criminal and law enforcer portrayed. A list of all shows coded is included in the appendix.

All programs in which at least one crime was committed or a law enforcer appeared were coded. Programs were identified according to series title, broadcast date, network and general program type (comedy vs. adventure/drama). A criminal was defined as an individual who knowingly or unknowingly violated any local, state, or federal criminal statute. A law enforcer was coded if he was identified as working in an occupation directly related to law enforcement at the local, state or national level, either through information that he or other characters supplied or through the televised work setting.

The content analysis system used for the study took a "conservative" approach. A character was coded as a criminal or law enforcer only when identified as such in each show. If a character was so defined in one episode, but this was not made explicit in another segment, he was coded only in the first episode. One could not assume that the television viewer would identify a character as a criminal or law enforcer unless this status was established in each episode. All characters were coded as individuals.

The sex and race of each character were also coded. The latter allowed for all major racial groups likely to be portrayed on television, including whites, blacks, Hispanics and those of Oriental extraction. Age was categorized in four major groups: those under 18, those 18 to 30, those aged 30 to 50, and those over 50. While age could not be determined by strict objective criteria, it was possible to easily fit people into these categories on the basis of their general appearance. (Of course, those on television may seem younger than their actual age.)

The relative economic status of a character was coded when known. These categories included wealthy, middle class and working class or poor. The continuity of characters was coded according to whether they were major stars of a series, played minor roles on a continuous basis or made only a single appearance This status was easily established from the show's opening credits, which specified these distinctions.

All criminals were classified according to occupation when such information was provided. These categories reflected the nature of criminals' economic endeavors on television rather than any comprehensive listing of actual occupations. These occupational categories included "professional" criminals, their flunkies, police, businessmen, professionals such as doctors and lawyers, blue collar workers and a diverse residual category that included such characters as a carnival announcer and a motorcycle racer.

Each law enforcer was also classified according to his general occupational position. The range of these positions reflected the particular diversity of law related occupations in television entertainment. Law enforcers fell into six general categories. First, there were various types of lawyers, all coded into a single category, since television often failed to specify their particular affiliation. Second were judges at all levels of the judicial system. Third were myriad private investigators. The fourth catgegory contained all police, from the "cop on the beat" up the hierarchy to the police commissioner, as well as sheriffs and their deputies. Fifth were other government agents including the F.B.I., C.I.A., and special investigative personnel from other government agencies, such as the internal revenue service, who were involved with criminal and law enforcement activities. Finally, a residual category contained law enforcers whose general occupations were not portrayed often enough to justify separate categories. Security guards were classified in this group.

Crimes were coded individually according to definitions provided by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports. Adapting the FBI's latest comprehensive list of crimes, [2] we also grouped all criminal acts on television into the following categories: Violent crimes include murder, robbery, kidnapping, aggravated assault and rape;serious crimes include these violent crimes as well as burglary, larceny and motor vehicle theft.

Criminals were also coded according to whether they were first time or habitual offenders. The motive that propelled each criminal to commit his crime was noted where such information was evident. [3] Among these motives were greed or some other form of self interest, mental imbalance, political, sexual, sympathetic or altruistic motives, personal vendettas, and accidental acts.

The outcome or plot resolution of a character's behavior was coded where known. These outcomes included success, failure and various types of character change. Success denoted achieving one's intended goal, such as getting away with a crime or capturing the criminal. Defeat occurred when a character did not succeed in his endeavor or was punished for it. Finally, a character could have a change of heart. For example, a criminal could ultimately express genuine regret and declare his intention to turn over a new leaf. In such cases, the outcome was coded as repentance.

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[2] U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. *Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in the United States - 1980* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981). Unless otherwise specified, all references to crime statistics are from the document.

[3] This category was adapted from one used by Joseph R. Dominick in "Crime and law Enforcement on Prime-time televsion," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol.37, No.2, Summer 1973,pp. 241-250.

4. TELEVISION'S CRIME WAVE

The 263 programs we viewed contained a total of 250 criminals who committed 417 crimes. That works out to almost one criminal and 1.7 crimes per show across the entire evening schedule. There can be no question then, that crime is a prevelant activity on television entertainment.

Nine out of ten crimes occurred on dramas like "Chips" and "Dynasty", although that genre accounted for only a minority of the programs viewed. The prevalence of comedy shows during prime time is accounted for partly by audience taste and partly by scheduling constraints. Many more sitcoms than dramas fit snugly into thirty minute time slots. So there are more comedies scheduled, although proportionately more time per program is given over to dramas.

Some crimes did occur on situation comedies, such as a "Barney Miller" episode where an irrate restaurant customer assaulted a waiter who demeaned his looks (3/12). Most crimes, however, were committed on adventure series. These included programs like an episode of "The Greatest American Hero" where a business executive, who manufactured "classified" equipment for the government, commited treason by selling secrets to an enemy country (4/15), as well as cops and robbers shows like "Hill Street Blues," which featured a variety of crimes ranging from common pickpockets (4/4) to a rapist who stalked his victims in a local park(3/28).

Just as striking as the sheer number of crimes were the types of crime portrayed. Television scripts rarely deal with the mundane and humdrum activities that occupy the cop on the beat. Real policemen spend much of their time dealing with such "low-profile" crimes as drunkeness, disorderly conduct, breaking and entering, and vandalism. By contrast, their television counterparts are confronted with an overwhelming tide of murders, muggings, and assaults.

In short, the bulk of crime on television is far more serious than in real life. It consists largely of vicious attacks by calculating criminals on innocent victims. This is shown graphically by table 1, which enumerates the various types of crimes portrayed on television. Murder, the most serious crime of all, is also by far the most common crime on television. Our study recorded over a hundred murders, or roughly one homicide every two and one half programs. The ingenuity of scriptwriters never seems to flag when it comes to concocting settings for homicides. Thus, a psychopathic hairdresser on the now defunct "Vegas" murdered several of his female customers (3/4). On "Hart to Hart", a ship's captain, who used his pleasure cruises to distribute counterfeit money to unsuspecting passengers, similarly disposed of a private investigator who infiltrated his operation (4/14).

Overall, such murders accounted for almost one crime in four shown on prime-time television. The preponderance of homocides sets the tone for television's portrayal of illegal activity. All the commonly depicted crimes involved the threat or use of force against other people. In addition to murder, these crimes included robbery, kidnapping and aggravated assault. Together these four categories of crime added up to 57 percent of all those coded. No other single category made up as much as five percent of the total.

After murder, robbery was the most prevalent form of unlawful behavior, accounting for almost one crime in six. For example, a team of muggers accosted the elderly on an episode of "Mork and Mindy" (4/16), while an armed teenager held up a grocery store on "Hill Street Blues" (3/28). Robbery, as defined in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports, always involves force or the threat of force. This reliance on actual or threatened violence distinguishes it from simple larceny(theft) and burglary.

The other two most common offenses during prime time, kidnapping and aggravated assault, each accounted for about one crime in twelve. The former was illustrated by a "Fantasy Island" segment on which a young man kidnapped his own girlfriend to extort money from her wealthy father (4/18). The latter was exemplified by a "Dynasty" script that called for a hired thug to administer a brutal beating to an adversary of series star Blake Carrington (3/9). Just as robbery is a more serious and violent crime than simple theft, aggravated assault is quite different from a simple fistfight or shoving match. It consists of an attack aimed at inflicting severe injury, often involving the use of a weapon. Simple assault, by contrast, involves neither a weapon nor serious injury.

In sum, the majority of crimes shown on prime time television were quite serious, involving personal attacks that carried at least the potential for serious injury or death. Of course, many other crimes were portrayed, some more serious than others. Nine additional categories each comprised between two and five percent of all instances of televised crime. In descending order of frequency, they involved bribery, burglary (breaking and entering), drug-related offenses, blackmail, fraud, gambling, larceny or theft, extortion and rape. When combined with the "big four" of murder, robbery, kidnapping and aggravated assault, that makes thirteen categories that account for 86 percent of all televised crime. By contrast such everyday "garden variety" crimes as prostitution, drunk driving, receiving stolen property, minor sex offense and weapons offenses each accounted for less than one half of one percent of all prime time crime.

5. TV VS. REALITY

Relatively few types of crime, especially the more serious crimes, account for most of the illegal activities television uses to entertain its prime time audience. To indicate the extent to which this behavior is weighted toward the most violent and dangerous crimes, we can compare these findings with FBI data on actual crime in America.

Direct comparisons are not easy to come by, since most FBI statistics are based on arrest records rather than reports of crime. Unlike much real-life crime, however, televised crime usually leads to arrest, so the figures are roughly comparable in this regard.

The relative frequency of real life crimes is indicated by table 2. It suggests that, after an evening spent watching television, a trip to the precinct house might be something of a letdown. At the top of the FBI's list are drunk driving, larceny (theft without violence), drunkenness, disorderly conduct, and drug abuse, which together account for a majority of all arrests nationwide. Compared to TV's concentration on murder, robbery, kidnapping, and aggravated assault, these transgressions seem positively prosaic. In descending order of frequency, the drunk and disorderly, thieves and drug abusers are followed by such relatively minor malefactors as those charged with burglary, simple assault and fraud.

The first of TV's high-visibility crimes to appear on the list is aggravated assault. It ranks ninth, accounting for only three percent of all arrests. Even so, serious assaults are far more common than robberies. Forcible thefts comprise only one percent of all arrests in real life, compared to one in every six crimes on television. Yet even robberies are far more common than murders, which dominate crime on the airwaves. In 1980 only one-fifth of one percent of all arrests were for murder or non-negligent manslaughter. As a proportion of all crimes, that means murders are over twelve times more frequent on television than in real life. As for kidnappings, they occur so infrequently that the FBI doesn't bother to list them as a separate category.

Of course, a policeman's life may not be dull, but neither is it always entertaining to others. One could hardly expect many television plots to revolve around cases of vandalism and littering. And while drunkenness may be a major health problem, how many ways can you film "The Days of Wine and Roses"? Nine hours of nightly prime time quickly consumes an awesome amount of plotting and dialogue, and it's easier to maintain audience interest with dastardly deeds than with the relatively humdrum stuff of everyday police work. Over the long run, "Dragnet's Joe Friday just can't compete with James Bond.

And yet, even given the need to entertain and titillate an audience increasingly jaded by the whirl of modern life, television's fantasy world remains a surprisingly dangerous place. Even when we restrict our attention to the most serious crimes, television selects out the darkest and most violent side of human behavior for its stories. To demonstrate this, we need only examine the relative incidence of the most serious categories of crime in real life. Serious crimes are those that comprise the FBI Crime Index, which serves as the basis for most of the FBI's yearly reports on the crime rate. Included in the crime index are murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, and motor vehicle theft.

In 1980, these serious crimes accounted for 23 percent of all arrests, excluding minor traffic offenses. In the programs we viewed from the 1980-81 television season, the same offenses accounted a majority (57 percent) of the crimes portrayed. With the addition of kidnappings, which are too infrequent to even appear on the FBI's list, serious crimes make up 66.7 percent, or precisely two-thirds of all prime time crime. Even more striking is the discrepancy between the relative proportion of violent crime on television and in real life. Violent crimes (murder, rape, aggravated assault, robbery and kidnapping) accounted for only five percent of all arrests in 1980; on television they accounted for 59 percent of illegal acts. So televised crime was almost twelve times as likely to be violent as was real life crime, as measured by arrests during roughly the same time period.

The ultimate violent crime, murder, ran through a variety of series. On "Vegas", a stockbroker, who "owned" a highclass call girl ring, killed two of his employees because they wanted out of the operation (4/1). On "Walking Tall", an industrialist ordered the murder of an employee who discovered that he had been illegally dumping toxic wastes (3/24). And on "The Greatest American Hero," rightwing terrorists killed an FBI agent who investigated their plot to seize control of the country (3/18).

The more mundane but pervasive real-life crimes were largely neglected. In fact, drunk driving was portrayed on only one program in our sample, an episode of "Chips" (4/19). According to National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates, alcohol is implicated in as many as half the traffic fatalities each year. * That means that mixing driving and drink is responsible for more deaths each year than the total number of homicides. Yet on television, murders are portrayed about one hundred times as often as drunk driving.

To fine tune these comparisons, we can examine the frequency of each major offense as a porportion of all serious crimes on television and in reality. An advantage of this procedure is that the FBI publishes totals of all reported offenses, not simply arrests, for serious crime only.

Table 3 reveals the very different proportions of major crimes that appear on television and in the the real America. It shows that most serious crime is directed toward property rather than people and does not involve the use or threat of force. On the 1980 FBI crime index, almost nine out of ten offenses are burglaries or thefts that involve no physical danger for the victim. Only one serious crime in ten inolves violence. Murder, rape and kidnapping each account for less than one percent of all serious crimes. Aggravated assault and robbery, i.e. theft involving force or its threat, each account for only about one serious crime in twenty.

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* U.S Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Fatal Accident Reporting System 1980 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office).

On television, the proportions of crime against people and property are almost exactly reversed. Crimes of violence make up seven out of eight serious offenses, while theft and burglary together account for only one crime in eight.

The audience did witness a few crimes of sort the that usually occupy the attention of law enforcers, such as a simple purse snatching on "Hill Street Blues." (4/21). However, they were far more likely to be treated to such fare as a "Magnum, PI" episode on which a man killed his girlfriend when she tried to leave him (4/2), or a "Flamingo Road" segment on which a woman tried to murder her own sister as the outcome of a romantic triangle (4/2).

The differences between fantasy and life are sharpest at opposite ends of the crime index spectrum. Simple thefts alone account for nearly two thirds of the FBI crime index but only six percent of serious crimes on television. At the other extreme, murders alone make up over one-third of all serious crimes on television, but only a miniscule one-sixth of one percent of the FBI crime index figures. Thus, even after all but the most serious crimes are excluded from the comparison, prime time crime is over 200 times more likely to involve homicide than is real life crime.

In summary, crime on television is more dangerous, more violent, and more likely to be directed against persons than is actual crime. The latest FBI statistics indicate that the most common offenses are rarely seen on television, while the most brutal and injurious crimes appear far out of proportion to their occurance in everyday life.

6. CRIMINALS IN TV ENTERTAINMENT

Television's portrayal of criminals also diverges markedly from real life. According to the latest FBI arrest reports, crimes are disproportionately committed by males, young people, nonwhites, and the poor and unemployed. They act out of a wide variety of motives, and more often than not their crimes go unpunished.

In the fantasy world of prime time television, most of these relationships are reversed. The bulk of prime time criminals are male, but they also tend to be white, middle or upper class adults. Their trangressions usually stem directly from simple greed, and they are usually thwarted before the closing credits. We shall consider each of these characteristics of TV criminals in turn.

7. SEX

Most crimes in America are committed by males, and television accurately reflects the disproportionate tendency of men to commit illegal acts. As Table 4 shows, males accounted for 84 percent of all arrests in 1980, including 90 percent of arrests for violent crimes. The proportions on television are about the same. About nine out of ten criminals were males, regardless of the severity of the offense. Male criminals ranged from a purse snatcher on "Hill Street Blues" (4/21) to a male involved in a drug related murder on "Hart to Hart" (3/3).

8. AGE

Youthful offenders have been much in the news of late. Especially disturbing is the rise in serious and violent crimes among teenagers. In 1980, young people not yet eighteen years old accounted for over one arrest in five across the country. Even more ominous, these teenagers and subteens made up 36 percent of those arrested for FBI index crimes - serious offenses ranging from robbery and larceny to rape and murders. More broadly, young people, mostly young males, are implicated in the vast majority of crimes in the United States. The eighteen to twenty-nine year old age group alone accounted for virtually half of all arrests in 1980. Overall, people not yet thirty years old totalled 70 percent of all recorded arrests for that year.

Arrest records for serious crimes are skewed even more heavily toward young offenders. The under thirties group made up 82 percent of those arrested for offenses that comprise the FBI crime index. Finally, individuals still in their teens or twenties made up nearly three out of four arrests for crimes of violence.

These statistics make it tempting to reverse the adage of 1960's protestors that you can't trust anyone over thirty. Of course, those arrested make up only a miniscule proportion of their age group. Nonetheless, it is clear that the vast majority of serious crimes are committed by teenagers and young adults.

On television, as Table 5 shows, the relationship between youth and criminality was reversed. The vast majority of criminals were mature adults over age thirty. This held true for both violent and non-violent crimes, as well as for both serious and minor offenses. A majority of criminals was found in the thirty to fifty age group, including 59 percent of those responsible for both serious and violent crime. Another one in five criminals was over age fifty, as was one in six violent criminals. By contrast, only about one criminal in four was under thirty, regardless of the seriousness of the offense.

In real life, a majority of those arrested for violent crimes is between the ages of eighteen and thirty. In the shows we viewed only 18 percent of the criminal characters came from this age group. Equally striking is the near absence of youth crime on television. Characters not yet eighteen years old accounted for only six percent of all criminals, seven percent of those who commit serious crimes, and eight percent of those guilty of illegal acts of violence. Not a single teenager under eighteen committed a murder on the 263 shows we watched, although this age group accounted for 1,742 murder arrests in 1980 or almost one homicide clearance in ten nationwide. Rather, the norm on television was represented by a middle-aged real estate manager involved in land swindles (BJ & Bear - 3/10), and a similarly aged drug dealer who found murder necessary to keep his business going. (Hart to Hart - 3/3). There were few crimes by teens, such as the involvement of three teenagers in a car theft ring on "Chips" (9/13). More common were crimes by those over 50, such as an aging police sargeant on "Enos" (4/15), who pushed heroin on the side, and an ambitious politician on "The Greatest American hero", who was involved in both murder and an attempted assasination of the President (3/18).

In sum, youth crime is a major concern for both law enforcers and the general public. In the fantasy world of television, however, it is hardly ever a problem. Instead crime is largely the province of mature adults.

9. RACE

The causes of the disproportionate concentration of crime among nonwhites have been much debated. Economic deprivation and a uniquely shameful legacy of societal discrimination clearly are major factors. In 1980, 25 percent of those arrested for crimes were black, another two percent were Asian or American Indian and the remaining 74 percent were white. Blacks accounted for 33 percent of those arrested for serious crimes, other nonwhites two percent, and whites 65 percent. Arrestees for violent crimes were 44 percent black, one percent other nonwhite, and 54 percent white. So blacks are arrested about twice as often as one would expect on the basis of their distribution in the population. For serious crimes this factor rises to nearly three to one, and for crimes of violence almost four to one. Similar results can be obtained from FBI victimization statistics (victims' reports of suspects' characteristics), [5] making it unlikely that these arrest totals are greatly inflated by racism on the part of the arresting officers.

It should be noted, of course, that blacks are disproportionately represented among the victims as well as the perpetrators of crimes. As Lee Daniels recently wrote in the *New York Times Magazine*, "because the poor are more victimized by crime than others, blacks, who represent a disproportionate percentage of the poor, are more likely than whites to be the victims of violent crimes." Daniels also points out that blacks are particularly vulnerable to street crime, and "the primary reason for most "black on black" crime ... is that most street crimes are committed by poor people out of desperation, impulse and opportunity." [6] Beyond this, we lack the competence to enter the debate over the societal causes for this differential crime rate. Our far more limited purpose is to compare these figures with comparable data from prime-time television.

Studies have shown that by the late 1960's black characters were written into television programs roughly in proportion to their distribution in the actual population, i.e., ten to twelve percent of all characters. We found that they make up about the same proportion of criminals on prime-time shows. As Table 6 indicates, nonwhite characters, almost all of them black, accounted for twelve percent of all criminals on the shows we viewed. The proportion dropped to ten percent of perpetrators of violent crime and only three percent of the murders. Illustrative of the relatively few black criminals was a drug dealer on "Barney Miller" (4/16) and a hotel maid who stole the tips of other maids on "The Jeffersons" (3/19).

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[5] U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. *Criminal Victimization in the United States, 1979* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1981).

[6] Lee Daniels, "Black Crime, Black Victims," *New York Times Magazine*, May 16, 1982, 39-44.

What are we to make of this disparity? We would hardly recommend that television scriptwriters assign more murders to black characters for the dubious purpose of bringing television closer to "reality". But the very absurdity of such a sugestion raises an important point about the social content of television entertainment. It is very difficult to interpret the relative paucity of televised crime (especially violent crime) among blacks as either a reflection of reality or a response to the profit motive. Instead these figures seem to reflect concerns of television writers, producers and network executives to avoid reinforcing negative stereotypes and producing negative role models. Whether such concerns are conscious or unconscious, individual or institutional, they illustrate the point that the social values of television entertainment are not solely aimed at maximizing profit.

Nor is there necessarily anything invidious about this fact. It was partly criticism from the black community, after all, that led to the disappearance of "Stepin Fetchit" characters in popular entertainment and made possible a series like "Roots". Whether or not the relatively low violent crime rate among black characters reflects conscious concerns of this sort, it suggests that the creators of TV entertainment cannot ignore their role in communicating images laden with social values.

10. OCCUPATION

Most criminals in television belong to relatively few occupational groups. Of those whose occupation was identified, over three out of four criminals fit into one of four categories: professional criminals, businessmen, police, and flunkies who do the dirty work for someone else.

Table 7 presents the occupational profile of primetime criminals. First and foremost were people whose only profession is crime itself. This group included members of organized crime as well as independent gangs of thieves.

Twenty-eight percent of all prime-time criminals were people whose entire income derived from the proceeds of their evildoing. The addition of their flunkies raises this group's total to 36 percent or more than one prime time criminal in three. So TV pictures a world inhabited by legions of full-time criminals who earn their livelihoods at the expense of law-abiding citizens.

These groups of "professional" deviants were illustrated by a drug smuggler on "BJ and the Bear" - (3/24) and a gang leader on "Chips" who reaped the profits from a widespread car theft ring (9/13). Typical of the flunkies or underlings of professional crime was a thug hired by "Dynasty's" ~~Black~~ Carrington to beat up his daughter's suitor (3/9). Blake

Yet by no means is all or even most TV crime the product of social deviants or criminal subcultures. Instead it can be traced to established figures in the social order such as well-off professionals, policemen, and, above all, businessmen. About one criminal in eight was identified as a businessman. As we found with professional criminals, however, this group became considerably larger when their flunkies were taken into account. The businessman who directs others to do his dirty work was a stock character in the shows we viewed. Businessmen and their flunkies together accounted for 24 percent of all criminals with identifiable occupations, far exceeding any other legitimate occupational group.

For example, the owner of a computer firm and his flunky were involved in shipping illegal explosives for profit (BJ. and the Bear - 4/14). Similarly, a theater owner on "Lobo" (3/3) and his ruthless underling not only embezzled company funds, but commited a murder to cover up the theft (3/3). We have already noted the business executive who tried to sell "classified" equipment to an enemy country (Greatest American Hero - 4/15) and how "Dynasty" executive Blake Carrington had his adversaries beaten up by hired thugs (3/9). Other examples include the stockbroker who murdered his call girls (Vegas - 4/1), a casino owner who skimmed the profits (Vegas - 4/15), the owner of a chemical company who falsified records and attemped murder to coverup his illegal dumping of toxic substances (Walking Tall - 3/24) the head of a world wide conglomerate who killed a competitior (Nero Wolfe - 3/27), a bank manager who arranged to have his own bank robbed (Lobo - 4/7), the owner of a record company who stole recordings from other companies (Lobo -4/21), a theater owner who embezzled company funds (Lobo - 3/3), the owner of a dating service who blackmailed employees (BJ and the Bear - 4/7) and the head of a real estate company who organized land swindles (BJ and the Bear - 3/10).

Our recent study of businessmen in TV entertainment, found that a high proportion of business characters are portrayed as criminals. [7] We now find that the converse is true as well; a substantial segment of TV's criminal population is drawn from the world of business.

Policemen came next in the line-up of offenders. On television, the upholders of law and order made up 13 percent of those who broke the law, or (about on one criminal in eight.) Included here were a a police officer on "Magnum, P.I.", who accepted a bribe to look the other way during a traffic violation(4/23) and a police lieutenant on the "Greatest American Hero" (9/3) who attempted to steal some "hot" diamonds from the original thieves.

They were followed by professional people such as doctors, lawyers, and architects, who together accounted for eight percent of these criminals. Typical of them was a doctor on "Hart to Hart" who ran a counterfeiting ring operation (4/14), and a lawyer on "Vegas" who drew his profits from pornography (3/25).

The occupational group least likely to contain lawbreakers consisted of blue collar workers, who comprised only five percent of all criminals whose occupations were known. Among the few blue collar criminals was a gardener on "Magnum, P.I." who pilfered already stolen money from a gang of criminals (4/16).

The remainder was scattered among such characters as a model who murdered her husband to collect money he had already stolen (Hart to Hart - 3/10), and a carnival announcer who ran fixed gambling games (BJ and the Bear - 4/7).

In sum, of criminals with known occupations, over one third were professional criminals or their flunkies, another one in four were businessmen and their underlings, one in eight were policemen, one in twelve came from the educated professions and only one in twenty held blue collar jobs. So television focuses far more on criminals near the top of the social hierarchy than on those whose activities stem from a culture of poverty. The Hollywood gangster of 1930's films, who turned to a life of crime to escape the hopelessness of Hell's Kitchen, has no equivalent on television today. Even the professional criminals are usually members of lucrative organizations, and most other lawbreakers are either pillars of the community or those sworn to protect it.

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[7] Linda Lichter, S. Robert Lichter, and Stanley Rothman, "How Show Business Shows Business," Public Opinion, Nov/Dec,'82-- see appendix C.

II. ECONOMIC STATUS

The image of evil-doing in high places is reinforced by the economic status accorded characters who commit crimes. To be sure, the status of most characters could not be clearly identified. Only one in four could be reliably coded as either rich, middle class or poor. However, that left 58 criminals with a clear place in the economic hierarchy. And this group was strongly weighted toward the top as Table 8 demonstrates. Sixteen percent of all criminals were clearly wealthy, compared to only four percent who were middle class and three percent who were poor or working class. Thus, a viewer was about five times more likely to see a wealthy criminal than a poor one. Moreover, the number of wealthy criminals was more than double that of middle class and lower class criminals combined.

Typical of wealthy criminals was the notorious Boss Hogg of "The Dukes of Hazzard", who used blackmail to illegally obtain a piece of valuable art (3/13). The even richer and equally notorious Blake Carrington of "Dynasty", who inhabits a luxurious mansion, knowingly allowed company funds to be used illegally (3/9). Among the middle class offenders was a medical examiner on "Quincy" who was an accessory in covering up a murder (4/8). Among the few poor characters was a ghetto youth on "Hill Street Blues" who tried to hold up a grocery store (4/21).

The data for homicides were even more striking. Eighty percent of the murders were committed by characters with no clear economic status, twenty percent by wealthy characters, and none by either middle class or poor characters. So among those characters whose economic status was known, murder was the exclusive province of the rich. In real life, of course, crime is associated with low social and economic status. According to Department of Justice Statistics, one in three inmates in state prisons was unemployed in the month prior to their arrest. Among those who had income from any source, the average income was almost 50 percent lower than that of comparable groups in the the general population. *

How much crime is directly and indirectly caused by poverty is a matter of interpretation. But no one would dispute that crime is associated with poverty and unemployment. Yet the TV watcher rarely sees this kind of crime. Instead the viewer is primarily exposed to stories about well-to-do criminals or those without a clearly defined economic status.

12. RECIDIVISM

In addition to establishing a demographic profile of prime time criminals, we were interested in the number of recidivists, or repeat offenders. Television portrays two types of lawbreakers, the first offender and the habitual criminal. There seems to be no middle ground; a character either commits a crime for the very first time or he is committed to a life of crime. As might be expectd from the high proportion of professional criminals, most fell into the latter category.

As table 9 shows, habitual criminals outnumbered first offenders by more than a four to one margin. In 44 percent of the cases, the plot didn't make clear whether the bad guy was a first timer or a repeater. Another 46 percent, almost half of all criminals, were clearly identified as recidivists. Only 10 percent were shown committing their first illegal act. For example, "Fantasy Island" featured a young woman whose crime debut was to aid her boyfriend in an extortion scheme against her own father (4/18). Many more, however, were repeat offenders, such as a mobster on "Magnum, P.I. " who, upon his release from prison, engaged in robbery and murder to obtain already stolen money (4/23). Another recent parolee on "Hart to Hart" kidnapped the show's heroine for a fat ransom from her wealthy husband (4/21).

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* In addition to Uniform Crime Reports, op.cit., see U.S. Department of Justice, Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. Myths and Realities About Crime (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office)

The high proportion of recidivists, relative to first offenders, suggests that prime-time criminals are rarely portrayed as the victims of ill luck or transient emotion. More often they habitually violate the law, often in pursuit of a criminal lifestyle.

Of course many of the crimes in real life are committed by repeat offenders. An FBI study found that, of over 250,000 people arrested for serious crimes during the period 1970-1975, 64 percent had been arrested at least once before. * These repeat offenders had been arrested an average of four times apiece over a period of five years. But even if we were to consider all repeat offenders as career criminals, which is clearly not the case, their incidence would not equal the picture presented on television. Among the prime-time characters who were specifically identified as either first offenders or habitual criminals, 82 percent fell into the latter group.

13. MOTIVE

So far we have concentrated on who commits crimes in television entertainment. We turn now to the question of why crimes are carried out. In real life motives for crimes are often murky, mysterious, or multiple. Often the perpetrator himself can't sort out the tangled strands of motivation that led him to break the law.

On television entertainment, however, one motive stands head and shoulders above all others in acounting for crimes of almost every sort. That motive is greed. On television, as Table 10 indicates, greed alone was the motivation of three out of four criminals or 74 percent overall including large majorities of every crime category except rape. Every single embezzler and drug dealer was motivated by greed, along with at least four out of five gamblers, blackmailers, extortionists, bribers and robbers and thieves. This greed was often calculated and cruel, as with a young man who robbed a bank on "Lobo" and took some of its customers as hostages (4/7), and a dogbreeder on "Nero Wolfe" who feigned concern for his cousin, then carefully executed her murder to inherit her money (3/6).

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* U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation. Uniform Crime Reports: Crime in America -1976 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office)

Other motives occasionally surfaced, although no additional category explained the behavior of more than a small proportion of the 250 criminal characters. Fifteen criminals were carrying out personal vendettas, such as a gangster on "Hill Street Blues" who assaulted an opposing gang member specifically to stir up trouble for series hero Captain Frank Furillo. He felt Furillo was all talk and no action in getting politicians to pay attention to the neighborhood's problems (4/4).

Another fourteen acted out of some sexual motivation, including all seven rapists. Each of these categories accounted for only about six percent of all criminals. Another four percent had sympathetic motives, such as a computer operator who, on pain of losing his job (and with a pregnant wife to support), reluctantly falsified a report to the EPA hiding the fact that his boss was illegally disposing toxic wastes (Walking Tall - 3/24).

Only three percent were insane or mentally imbalanced, such as a disturbed Vietnam veteran on "Chips" who vandalized small farm pesticide sprayers because he had been a pilot releasing defoliation chemicals on innocent Vietnamese civilians. He was turned over to a Veterans hospital for treatment (4/5).

One percent, or three characters, broke the law by accident. The motives of the remaining four percent were not made clear by the plot. All these categories were obviously dwarfed by the 184 criminals who acted on the basis of avarice. Precise comparisons with the motivations of actual criminals are mostly unavailable. However, the FBI does publish statistics on the motives and circumstances surrounding homicides. Although their categories differ from ours, they provide some indication of the different motivations of murderers in real life and in TV entertainment.

On television the motives of murderers weren't very different from those of other criminals. An overwhelming majority, 75 percent, killed because of greed. Nine percent dispatched their victims as the denouement of a personal vendetta. Six percent of the killers had some sexual motive. The motives of four percent were never explained. That left only six percent who killed for any other reason.

This breakdown can be compared to the FBI's 1980 statistics summarized in Table 11. They show that by far the largest number of murders, almost half, were committed in the course of arguments. Another one in four were proven or suspected to result from some other felonious activity such as robbery, rape, etc. Fifteen percent of homicides were of unknown motivation, and a slightly larger proportion were brought together under the catch-all category of "other motives." From this entire list only about one in seven murders could be taken at face value as the product of greed. That represents the combination of eleven percent of murders attributable to robberies and a scant three percent that resulted from arguments over property or money. Although greed my be a hidden element standing behind many of the other categories, it is clearly not the major cause of most homicides, as it is on television.

On prime time, then, criminals rarely act out of momentary passion, mental imbalance, political conviction or any of the other myriad causes that lead people to break the law. In television entertainment, the lawbreaker usually wants just one thing -- he wants more.

14. RESOLUTION

Criminals on television are a bad lot. Most are the perpetrators of particularly brutish acts which they consciously choose to commit on the basis of pure self-interest. Viewers will be relieved to learn, however, that most get their just desert before the final credits.

As Table 12 shows, over two out of three criminals in our sample were defeated - either arrested, killed, or otherwise thwarted in their aims. Compared to the 68 percent who suffered defeat, success was achieved by a miniscule eight percent, or one criminal in twelve. Another four percent resolved to change their ways, and the remaining 20 percent came to no clear plot resolution. A common fate for criminals was exemplified by a drug dealing police sargeant on "Enos" who was captured by his own men (4/15), and an extortionist on Vegas who was killed by his even greedier partner (3/25).

If these results are reassuring to law and order advocates, the comparable figures for serious crimes provide even greater relief. About four out of five lawbreakers who committed FBI index crimes were defeated, and only five percent were successful. The figures for homicide were virtually identical: 81 percent defeated, only five percent successful and 14 percent unresolved.

Anyone faintly familiar with the criminal justice system is aware that these figures bear little relation to the realitites of crime and punishment in America. The most recent FBI crime index figures indicate that, in the majority of cases, crime does pay. Table 13 shows that, of all serious crimes in 1980, fewer than one in five resulted in an arrest. Moreover, this "clearance" rate of 19 percent for index crimes does not take into account whether the actual perpetrator was the one arrested, nor whether the arrest ultimately led to conviction. The police did somewhat better in the case of violent crimes, achieving a clearance rate of 44 percent. Yet even that arrest rate means that a substantial majority of violent crimes went unsolved.

On television, by contrast, even combining the successful perpetrators of serious crimes with those whose fates were not resolved produced only one in six who escaped punishment. The results for violent criminals were virtually identical. Of course it is hardly surprising that TV scripts punish the perpetrators of violent and evil deeds. We note only that the self-imposed principle that crime must not pay during prime time brings the scriptwriters into conflict with real life.

1[illegible]. LAW ENFORCERS - A PROFILE

A total of 373 law enforcers appeared in the programs we viewed. Law enforcers could be seen regularly on three networks and both comedies and dramas. Slightly over half, of all law enforcers, 54%, appeared on NBC, 27 percent on ABC, and the remaining 19 percent on CBS. An overwhelming majority, 81 percent, appeared on adventures or dramas such as "Magnum, P.I." and "Hill Street Blues," while 19 percent were on comedies such as " Barney Miller" and "Three's Company."

These guardians of justice were not solely confined to typical cops and robbers shows. Thirty-five percent appeared on series whose major characters were not police or private eyes. Law enforcers were spread about evenly among the three major types of characters. Thirty percent were series stars, such as police captain Frank Furillo of "Hill Street Blues," and private eye Thomas Magnum, from the show of the same name. Minor continuing characters, such as the police chief on "Lobo," constituted 41 percent of the sample. Finally, 29 percent made only a single appearance. Such characters included a district attorney on "Nero Wolfe" and a police sergeant on "The Greatest American Hero."

Television's protectors of law and order comprised a varied collection of occupational groups, as table 14 shows. The single largest group, 71 percent, were represented by various ranks of police, from the captain on "Enos" to the patrol officers of "Chips." Lawyers, such as public defender Joyce Davenport of "Hill Street Blues," made up 17 percent of the sample. Seven percent were private investigators such as the title character of "Nero Wolfe." Four percent of all law enforcers were government agents, such as F.B.I. agent Bill Maxwell on "The Greatest American Hero." The remaining one percent were included in a residual category represented by such professions as security guards.

Most private eyes, 69 percent, were series stars, while a majority of both lawyers and government agents made only a single appearance. When police appeared, they were most likely to be minor series regulars, (49 percent), while 29 percent were stars and 22 percent made a single appearance.

Law enforcers on television were predominately white males in the prime of life. Eighty-nine percent were male and nearly as many, 85 percent, were white. The remaining 15 percent were black. No other non-white groups were represented. Sixty-three percent were between the ages of 30 and 50, while the rest were about equally divided between those under 30 and those over 50.

Most law enforcers were one dimensional characters whose roles revolved around getting their job done. Two out of three were shown engaging in purely occupational tasks. By contrast, only six percent were featured in a personal role, and 27 percent combined elements of their work and personal lives. Some shows did present the private lives of law enforcers. For example, in an episode of "Soap," a police officer and his girlfriend argued about the seriousness of their relationship (3/16). But such cases were rare. Viewers were much more likely to see private detective "Nero Wolfe" solving a crime or police captain "Barney Miller" juggling the problems of fellow officers and New York City residents. Stars, whose characterizations have the best chance to be well developed on TV, were more likely to involve themselves in varied activities than other types of characters. They were about twice as likely to engage in personal activities or to combine occupational and personal tasks as were minor regulars or single appearance characters. Private eyes, the group most likely to be stars, also had the greatest chance at a more well-rounded role. Thus, private eye Dan Tanna of "Vegas" stalked the murder of a woman to whom he had a deep personal attachment (4/1).

In general, however, strictly law related activities consumed the most time of all characters. Perhaps this is why the audience received very little information on their economic status. Eighty-nine percent of all law enforcers were of unknown economic status. Three percent were wealthy, eight percent middle class and none were working class or poor.

16. PLOT FUNCTIONS

The most crucial aspect of the law enforcer's role deals with the general nature of his function. Were law enforcers the dedicated protectors of justice and order, or were they themselves lawbreakers? Did they possess the skills to execute their jobs properly, or did crimes go unsolved due to their incompetence?

In general, law enforcers fared well, although they were somewhat tainted by incompetence or even illegal behavior. Table 15 shows that 54 percent were portrayed positively, 28 percent negatively, and 18 percent played neutral roles. Representative of the positively portrayed law enforcers was Sheriff Lobo, from the show of the same name. In one segment he worked out a plan to capture bank robbers who had taken a group of customers as hostages (4/7). By contrast, a sheriff of less noble motives, Titus Simple of "Flamingo Road," was involved in blackmailing and bribery (4/2). Typical of the neutral law enforcers was an attorney on "Nero Wolfe" who briefly discussed a case with the series star (3/6).

Although this general picture of law enforcers held true on both comedies and dramas, there were differences on the three networks, indicated by table 16. Those on ABC and NBC were positive a majority of the time (62 percent and 56 percent, respectively), but on CBS, negative law enforcers slightly outnumbered positive ones (39 percent to 37 percent). ABC painted a somewhat rosier picture than the other two networks, casting only 15 percent of its law enforcers as bad guys.

Many other characteristics were involved in the portrayal of a character's plot function. For example, as table 17 shows, stars fared much better than other types of characters. An overwhelming majority of stars (80 percent) were positive, compared to a slight majority of 50 percent for minor series regulars and a mere 32 percent for those making guest shots. These single appearance characters fared worst of all. Thirty-eight percent of them were shown as bad guys. Minor continuing characters were close behind with a 31 percent negative rating. In contrast, only 14 percent of stars were cast as bad guys.

Among the majority of stars who made a brave showing were police officers Baker and Poncherello of "Chips," who tried to protect a man from the threats of his deranged enemy (4/5). Minor regulars, who were also usually positive, included a police detective on "Hill Street Blues" who went undercover in an attempt to capture a drug dealer (3/21). Among single appearance characters, who did not fare so well, was a gruff police detective on "Different Strokes" who arrested an innocent woman on theft charges (4/1).

Younger and nonwhite law enforcers also fared better than others. We see from table 18 that 68 percent of those under 30 were portrayed positively, compared to 53 percent for those aged 30 to 50 and 40 percent for those over 50. Those in the older age groups were about three times as likely to be bad guys as were the young law enforcers.

Thus, a police detective approaching retirement on "Hill Street Blues," helped cover-up a politician's involvement in a young girl's murder (3/21).

Among nonwhite law enforcers, as table 19 shows, 63 percent of portrayals were positive, compared to 52 percent among whites. Even more striking, whites were more than twice as likely to be portrayed negatively (31 vs. 13 percent.)

Some types of law enforcers also made a better showing than others. The differences are shown in table 20. Private eyes far outstripped all other groups in their positive image. Ninety-three percent of these one-man guardians of justice were shown favorably, and not a single character was a bad guy. The remaining seven percent played neutral roles. Otherwise they were a varied lot. Among their ranks was the portly "Nero Wolfe," young and stylish Dan Tanna of "Vegas'" and tough Thomas Magnum from "Magnum, P.I."

Police were the next most favorable portrayed group. A slight majority of 53 percent played positive roles, 30 percent were negative and 17 percent neutral. Typical of positive images of police was Dan Tanna's friend, the dedicated Lieutenant Dave Nelson of "Vegas." Negative police were more likely to resemble a vicious and corrupt captain on "B.J. and the Bear," who accepted bribes and was involved in drug deals (4/14, 3/28).

Lawyers fared somewhat less well than policemen, although a plurality was portrayed in a favorable light. Forty-four percent received positive portrayals, 31 percent were shown as negative, and the remaining 25 percent played neutral roles. They ranged from admirable characters like Joyce Davenport, the tireless public defender (and Captain Furillo's love interest) on "Hill Street Blues," to shysters and worse. In fact several ended up on the wrong side of the law, like a lawyer on "Nero Wolfe" who was responsible for a murder (4/17).

Government agents were the only major group with as many negative or positive portrayals, 40 percent on each side of the ledger. Even the good guys were rarely of the square jawed heroic variety; more representative was Bill Maxwell of "The Greatest American Hero," a competent but unpolished F.B.I. agent. This group was just as likely to include an incompetent C.I.A. agent who was too concerned with agency red tape to notice the clues to a kidnapping ("Greatest American Hero - 4/8).

The portraits of these law enforcers become more revealing when we examine the particular types of positive and negative functions that they performed. Law enforcers were more likely to be positive than negative, but when they did err, their transgressions were fairly serious, as table 21 illustrates. Twenty-nine percent of the bad guys committed illegal acts, and an equal number were professionally incompetent. Eighteen percent were foolish, an equal number were greedy, and the remaining six percent were malevolent.

Moreover, as table 22 reveals, the different types of law enforcers were guilty of quite different patterns of negative behavior. Lawyers who erred were most likely to be greedy (40 percent) and least likely to be professionally incompetent (10 percent). In contrast, police usually committed a crime themselves (33 percent) or failed to perform their jobs competently (32 percent). Half the bad government agents were incompetent, and a third were greedy. Among law enforcers who turned to crime was a police sergeant on "Enos" who dealt in drugs (4/15). Incompetence was demonstrated by a police officer on "The White Shadow" who beat up an unarmed suspect while arresting him (3/2). In another demonstration of occupational incompetence, an officer on "Hill Street Blues" exacerbated an argument between two men involved in a fender-bender by losing his own temper (4/4). We see from table 23 that positive law enforcers were a more uniform lot. Two-thirds of them (65 percent) demonstrated professional competence, 27 percent were friendly or helpful, and only eight percent went beyond the call of duty.

The critical differences among the types of positive acts performed were accounted for by the different types of characters and occupations. First, as table 24 indicates, stars were most likely to be competent or heroic. Seventy-two percent of stars who were postiviely portrayed performed their jobs well, compared to 65 percent of minor series regulars and 51 percent of those making a guest appearance. Both minors and guests were more likely to be merely friendly than were stars. Fifteen percent of these stars performed some heroic deed compared to only one percent of minor regulars and three percent of single appearance characters. Overall, stars were responsible for 87 percent of heroic acts performed by law enforcers. Among these heroes was police captain Frank Furillo of "Hill Street Blues," who not only negotiated to save a group of hostages from sure death, but used his personal time and connections to have a misguided juvenile placed in a private rehabilitation center (4/21). In another heroic deed, police captain Barney Miller refused to divulge the identity of an informant and went to jail to preserve the credibility of his department (3/19).

Of lawyers who were positive, half were friendly and half were competent. Eighty-three percent of government agents were competent and 17 percent (only one case) heroic. Among police, about two-thirds were competent, 27 percent friendly and eight percent heroic. Private eyes were mostly competent, 82 percent, with 11 percent friendly and seven percent heroic.

Finally, table 25 combines all the various positive and negative functions into a single comparison to provide an overview of how law enforcement is portrayed on prime-time television. The most frequent portrayal was one of simple competence. Over one in three characters who enforce the law were shown doing their jobs adequately, if not heroically. For that is the flip side of television's emphasis on the competent cop (or other law enforcer). Only four percent, or one in twenty-five, acted beyond the call of duty. In fact, for every law enforcer who performed heroically, two performed incompetently and another two actually broke the law themselves. Incompetence and illegal activity each accounted for one characterization in twelve among law enforcement characters. To be sure, both categories were outweighed by competent characters, as well as those who behaved in a friendly or otherwise sympathetic fashion. As we noted earlier, positive portrayals far outweighed negative ones. But equally noteworthy was the dearth of heroes among a group whose occupations make them prime candidates for any number of heroic scenarios.

17. BENDING THE RULES

Beyond simple plot function, we examined other aspects of the way law enforcers performed their duties. We were interested in characters who bend the rules to get the job done. The unorthodox defender of justice who rarely does things according to "the book" is a stock entertainment device. Such characters conform to the spirit but not the letter of the law, and they often have to fight the system in order to make it work. This tradition is at least as old as Sherlock Holmes and as contemporary as "Baretta" and "Kojak." So we analyzed current portrayals of law enforcers with this time-honored theme in mind. Specifically, in upholding both the law and principles of justice, do law enforcers themselves "bend the rules" in the greater pursuit of justice? If so, how far do they bend the rules and how does this affect their portrayal on television?

We found that a relatively small part of the sample, only eight percent, bent the rules for any reason while remaining on the side of the angels. On the light side, such behavior included two "Hill Street Blues" police officers who appropriated for their barbecue a bullet-ridden side of beef that was to be used as evidence (4/21). On the same series, a dedicated police detective became overly enthusiastic during an interrogation and bit the ankle of an assailant. He was quickly lectured by his superior, Frank Furillo, on preserving criminals' rights, and he promised not to repeat such behavior (3/28).

Among other unorthodox law enforcers, private eye Dan Tanna of "Vegas" searched a hotel room to find information on a murderer (4/1). F.B.I. man Bill Maxwell, of "The Greatest American Hero," was an accessory to "borrowing" F.B.I. files concerning a case be in which he was entwined (4/8).

In a more serious vein, sheriff Bufford Pusser from the short-lived series "Walking Tall," burst into a building without a warrant and destroyed the equipment for a drug-making operation (3/31).

Those who did bend the rules were most likely to be stars, (47 percent) and the two groups of series regulars together constituted 87 percent of the rubbending. Interestingly, these rule benders fared somewhat better as a group than those who walked a straight line. Of those who bent the rules, 64 percent were portrayed positively compared to a 56 percent positive rating for those who went by the book. Government agents were more than twice as likely as any other occupational group to bend the rules; twenty percent did so. But this total was largely accounted for by the repeated escapades of Bill Maxwell, the not-so-typical F.B.I. man on "The Greatest American Hero."

10. SOLVING CRIMES

We usually think of crime solving as the chief business of law enforcers. Pursuing criminals rather than tending to more mundane activities certainly makes for more exciting television. Surprisingly, though, almost half of all law enforcers (49 percent) were not involved in crime solving activity, even if they performed other tasks related to their jobs. Twenty percent were primary agents in solving crimes, and 13 percent lent seconday assistance in this endeavor. Eighteen percent of those involved in tracking criminals failed to solve crimes.

Involvement in crime-solving varied considerably among the different types of characters. Forty-nine percent of all stars were primary agents in solving crimes compared to only five percent among minor regulars and 11 percent of those making guest appearances. Only five percent of stars failed at solving crimes, compared to 24 percent of minor series regulars and 22 percent for guest characters.

A character's role in crime solving was closely linked with his overall function. Table 26 shows that 98 percent of the primary crime solving agents were positively portrayed, as were 84 percent of secondary agents. In contrast, only 38 percent of those not involved in crime solving were shown as positive, as were only 27 percent of those who were involved in investigations, but did not solve the crime. Forty-nine percent of those in last group were shown in a negative light.

Dexterity in solving crimes was also related to a law enforcer's occupation, as table 27 indicates. The key finding here was the high success rate of private eyes relative to all other groups. Sixty-two percent of the private eyes were portrayed as catching the bad guy themselves, a success rate over three times as high as that enjoyed by any other group. By contrast, only 19 percent of policemen functioned as primary crime solvers.

Thus, the roles of private eyes like Dan Tanna, Thomas Magnum and Nero Wolfe usually focused on crime solving. Even when other law enforcers assisted them, these private eyes inevitably ended up in the Sherlock Holmes role as master crime solver, while their companions were relegated to the role of second rate Doctor Watsons.

The privileged position of private eyes helped mask most law enforcers' tendency toward failure as crime solvers. Every other group actually failed to get their man more often than they succeeded as primary crime solvers. By contrast, private eyes proved almost incapable of failure in catching criminals; the seven percent who did so paled in comparison to the 62 percent who were primary agents in solving crimes. The unexpectedly high failure rate of most law enforcers, combined with the fantastic success of private eyes, is one of the most striking findings of the study. Once again it is the outsider, the man in the trenchcoat, who saves the day when ordinary law enforcers prove unequal to the task.

19. PLOT RESOLUTION

The involvement in crime-solving, along with a host of other factors, affected the way characters fared in the plot resolution. The results are shown in Table 28. Not surprisingly, 95 percent of the primary crime solvers and 87 percent of the secondary ones were ultimately successful compared to only about a third of those who were either not involved in crime-solving or those who were involved, but did not solve a crime themselves. The latter groups were defeated 32 percent and 48 percent of the time, respectively.

Overall, law enforcers were successful 58 percent of the time and defeated 21 percent of the time. Two percent underwent a character change and 19 percent had an unresolved outcome.

Not surprisingly, stars, who were more likely to be positive and primary crime solvers, were also the most successful. As table 29 indicates, 76 percent of all stars were successful, compared to 59 perent of minor regulars and only 31 percent of those who made a single appearance. This last group was the only one more likely to be defeated than to succeed. Thirty-seven percent of these guest characters were defeated, compared to 25 percent of minor regulars and only five percent of stars. Among the successful stars was Sheriff Lobo who captured bank robbers and rescued those they had held hostage (4/7). Likewise, a police detective, who played a minor continuing role on "Hill Street Blues," succeeded in capturing a drug dealer(4/4). But among single appearance law enforcers, a police sargeant on "Enos" who dealt in drugs, was himself captured by other police (4/15).

Overall, success was enjoyed by positively portrayed law enforcers, while evil or foolish ones were defeated. Eighty-five percent of positive characters were successful and only four percent were defeated. The remainder was unresolved. In contrast, 59 percent of the bad guys failed and only ten percent succeeded.

Differences in outcome were also evident among various occupations, as table 30 reveals. Private eyes received the lion's share of success with a 100 percent success rating in plot resolutions. This diminished to 59 percent for police, 34 percent for lawyers and 33 percent for government agents. This last group was defeated twice as often as it succeeded, while police and lawyers were each defeated about 20 pecent of the time. Typical of private investigators was Dan Tanna, who miraculously captured a murderer, even though he was temporarily blinded (3/18). In contrast, a police detective on "Hill Street Blues" ignored all of his other responsibilities because he wanted to set up a laundramat on the side. But his hopes and financial investment were dissolved when the property he purchased for his business was destroyed (3/21). And, of course, the most egregious of bad guys, like a drug dealing cop on "Enos," got a taste of the law and order he failed to uphold (4/15).

20. CITIZENS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT

Thus far we have dealt only with characters who were law enforcers by profession. But on television, citizens play an active role in crime-solving. Here we shall document their role and examine how these citizens relate to law enforcers in the fight against crime.

A total of 37 citizens took some active part in crime solving in the series we coded. They accounted for just under ten percent of all characters involved in law enforcement. Many did so because the crimes somehow affected them or their acquaintances. For example, millionaire Jonathan Hart of "Hart to Hart" cracked a counterfeiting ring that was operating on a ship he owned (4/14).

Relative to the law enforcement professionals, citizens were more likely to be stars. Eighty-one percent of them were series stars like Jonathan and Jennifer Hart or the hell-raising Duke boys from "The Dukes of Hazard." Among professional law enforcers, private eyes were most likely to be stars (69 percent).

Citizens were also more positively portrayed than other law enforcement characters. In fact, all citizens involved in solving crimes were shown positively. The most positively portrayed law enforcers were private eyes, another group of "outsiders," at 93 percent. But from there it is quite a drop to the 53 percent positive rating for police.

Thirty percent of citizens bent the rules, a higher proportion than any group of law enforcers. But this did not tarnish their positive image at all. Thus, a high school teacher, who led a double life as "The Greatest American Hero," "flew" into the F.B.I. to "borrow" files on a top-secret case (4/8). Hero Jonathan Hart broke into an apartment to find information on a murderer (3/17).

Further, citizens were more likely to be the primary crime solvers than any group of law enforcers. Sixty-eight were primary crime solvers, as were 62 percent of private eyes. Yet only 20 percent of police and 19 percent of government agents were the primary solvers.

Not surprisingly, almost all citizens, 97 percent, were successful in their endeavor. Only PI's enjoyed a slightly higher success rate of 100 percent in plot resolutions. This was quite a contrast to the next highest rating of 59 percent success for police. Thus, "citizen" Jonathan Hart captured a murderer (3/24), and broke-up a counterfeiting ring (4/14), while "The Greatest American Hero" saved a young couple from the clutches of Soviet spies(4/8).

21. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In our study of 263 prime-time programs from the 1980-81 television season, we examined the nature of crime and law enforcement. A content analysis system was employed to analyze the types of illegal behavior shown, the characteristics of criminals, and the portrayal of law enforcement officials on these programs.

Prime-time television creates a fantasy world that is frequently dangerous and violent. Our study identified 417 illegal acts, an average of about 1.7 crimes per series episode. Moreover lawbreakers on television tended to engage in the most serious and violent crimes, to an extent that bears little relation to reality. Every fourth crime shown was a murder; one crime in six was a violent theft. Overall, a majority of all illegal acts portrayed were crimes of violence.

All this is in sharp contrast to FBI statistics showing that most crimes are such mundane offenses as drunk driving, larceny, disorderly conduct, and drug abuse. Even serious crime in real life tends to be directed against property rather than persons. But television entertainment largely ignores most aspects of real crime in America, focusing instead on the most serious, violent, and life-threatening offenses. By sensationalizing crime in this way, TV misses an opportunity to educate the audience about the true dimensions of America's crime problem, which the public views with growing alarm and frustration.

If prime-time crime bears little relation to the genuine article, television's criminals are equally far removed from their real life counterparts. Television introduces the viewer to two types of criminals - the professional deviant who lives a life of crime, and the apparent pillar of the community who turns to crime to maintain or better his standard of living. Criminals on prime-time are usually middle or upper class white males over age 30. As "mature" adults, they rarely act on impulse. Instead their lawbreaking is carefully calculated to advance their own interest.

The vast majority of televised crime is predicated on pure greed, and wealthy characters were over twice as likely to commit crimes than those identified as poor or middle class. Along these lines, a stock criminal type is the businessman whose selfish pursuit of profit leads him into illegal activity. Businessmen and their underlings account for almost one in four lawbreakers with identifiable occupations. They constitute the largest criminal group aside from professional gangsters. But substantial numbers of criminals are drawn from other pillars of the community, including educated professionals and the police themselves. In fact, one criminal in eight was drawn from the ranks of those sworn to uphold the law.

This portrait of crime and criminals is perhaps most notable for what it fails to show about the crime problem that today preoccupies the American public. We rarely see the juvenile delinquent or the youth gang. Nor are we exposed to the culture of poverty that is directly or indirectly responsible for so much crime. Similarly, the black community's increasingly public concern with street crime is rarely in evidence.

Just as the focus on well-to-do lawbreakers ignores the relationship between poverty and crime, so the concentration on calculated self-interest bypasses the role of other motivations from emotional flare-ups to mental illness.

Finally, television's nightly stream of murder, mugging, and mayhem obscures the less dramatic but much more common threats to law-abiding citizens from such unspectacular sources as drunken driving, drug abuse, and burglary. But then, in at least one respect, there is no crime "problem" on television. In the fantasy world of TV entertainment, most law breakers are thwarted, and crime is rewarded with punishment. Like most other aspects of prime-time crime, this too bears little relation to reality.

Television's crime stoppers were the 373 characters we identified as law enforcers. Over two-thirds were police, with the remainder divided among private eyes, lawyers, judges, and government agents. An additional 37 private citizens performed law enforcement functions, such as capturing a criminal.

Law enforcers appeared frequently on comedies and dramas alike, on all three networks, in both continuing and single appearance roles. Most were white males; 15 percent were nonwhites, and only 11 percent were women.

In general law enforcers were portrayed in a positive light, although "supercops" were rarely seen. Fifty-four percent functioned as good guys, 28 percent as villains, and the rest played neutral roles. The largest number, about one in three, were portrayed as doing their jobs in a competent manner. However, very few were cast in a heroic light. Only four percent went beyond the call of duty, rather than just performing competently. Moreover, significant minorities were portrayed as either inept or positively criminal; about one law enforcer in six fell into these categories. So law enforcers fared rather well in general, but they were tainted somewhat by incompetence and even illegal behavior.

A major finding was the privileged position of private investigators relative to all other groups of law enforcers. Ninety-three percent of private eyes functioned as good guys, compared to only 53 percent of police and fewer than half the lawyers and government agents. In all the programs we viewed, not a single private eye played the heavy. By contrast, the crooked cop and the greedy lawyer provided recurring negative images of law enforcers.

Private eyes proved almost godlike in their crime solving abilities, while other law enforcers were often portrayed as mere mortals. Sixty-two percent of the private eyes were the primary agents in solving crimes, compared to only 19 percent of policemen. In fact every group other than private eyes actually failed to solve crimes more often than they succeeded, though they sometimes assisted others in making the collar. By contrast, private eyes succeeded almost nine times as often as they failed. So ordinary law enforcement officials were presented as highly fallible. More often than not, they either failed to catch the crook or played supporting roles for the glamorous private eyes. The "supercop" is alive and well in prime-time, but he has traded his badge for a trenchcoat.

The phenomenal success of private eyes was part of a broader trend involving the need for outside help or unorthodox means to enforce the law. In addition to that quintessential outsider, the private eye, the police often required the help of private citizens to foil the bad guys. Their assistance did not take the form of providing evidence or identifying suspects, but of actually solving the crime themselves. Private citizens actually edged out private eyes as the most effective group of crime solvers. Finally, law enforcers who bent the rules were over twice as likely to solve crimes as those who went by the book.

In sum, neither Dick Tracy nor Joe Friday provided the model law enforcer for today's cops and robbers shows. We found few square jawed "Blue Knights" who captured the villains and comforted the victims. Nor did television favor the methodical and mundane investigative style of "Dragnet's " dedicated cops. In fact, police did not fare as well as one might expect. A slight majority were portrayed favorably, but when they did err, their transgressions tended to be quite serious. Moreover, they rarely played primary roles in solving crimes. Lawyers and government agents fared no better. The glamor boy of law enforcement was the private eye whose Holmesian abilities often consigned the law enforcement professionals to the role of Doctor Watson.

More broadly, effective law enforcement was often the province of the outsider who bypassed the law enforcement establishment. On television, the police, the government and the legal profession are often shown as competent if uninspired upholders of the law. But these law enforcement professionals often need the help of the lone outsider, the private eye or the citizen-detective, to bring evildoers to justice.

How can one account for the "alternative reality" that television creates in its portrayal of crime and law enforcement? We believe it reflects both commercial pressures and the social values of Hollywood's creative community.

This conclusion is drawn from the results of our survey of over 100 top writers, producers, and industry executives. (Complete results are presented in Appendix D.) For example, nearly three out of five members of the "Hollywood elite" themselves agree that there is too much violence on television. Moreover, three out of four believe that TV entertainment should portray society realistically.

In this case why do they portray crime in such a violent and unrealistic fashion? Presumably they are constrained by audience tastes, in the form of Nielsen ratings. Yet ratings cannot account for the entire disparity between real life crime and television's version. Audiences may like "shoot-em-ups", but they are so not alienated from the authorities that are consistently denigrated during prime time.

Whether public faith in authority is justified or misplaced, it is not reflected in TV's portrayal of crime as the province of businessmen, educated professionals, and the police. These portrayals instead seem to reflect the orientations of television's creators, who are very skeptical toward our social and political institutions. For example, three out of four say our legal system favors the wealthy, and nearly two-thirds believe that the very structure of American society causes people to become alienated from it. They are just as critical of those in positions of authority. Just under two-thirds agree that public officials are not interested in the average citizen, and 82 percent reject the notion that those in authority know best. Almost half disagree strongly that one should defer to those in authority, and not a single person expressed strong confidence in authority.

Given their widespread rejection of both American social institutions and their guardians, one would suspect that many in the television elite would like to see sustantial changes in our society. In fact, a substantial minority of 43 percent endorses a complete overhaul of American institutions. In line with this sentiment, they perceive business leaders as one of the most influential groups in American society; they would prefer to drop business from the top to the middle of the pecking order, behind consumer groups, intellectuals, blacks, and feminists.

Our studies suggest that television's content may reflect, in part, the attitudes of television's creators. But aren't they simply responding to the demands of the marketplace? We found that the Hollywood elite do not regard themselves purely as entertainers, but as social reformers as well. Two out of three agree that television entertainment should be a major force for social reform. At the same time, only one in eight believe that TV is too critical of traditional values. In short, television's creators are not in it just for the money. They also seek to move their audience toward their own vision of the good society.

TABLE 1

Crimes Portrayed on TV Entertainment Programs

Crime	Frequency	Percent
Murder	101	24
Robbery	65	16
Kidnapping	37	9
Aggravated Assault	35	8
Bribery	19	5
Burglary	18	4
Drug-related	17	4
Blackmail	14	3
Fraud	14	3
Gambling	12	3
Larceny (theft)	10	2
Extortion	7	2
Rape	7	2
Embezzlement	6	2
Auto Theft	5	1
Vandalism	5	1
Liquor Offenses	4	1
Loan Sharking	4	1
Other	37	9
	417	100%

Note: Percentages in tables may not sum to 100 percent because of rounding.

TABLE 2

Total Arrests, All Crimes 1980 FBI Statistics (%)

Drunk Driving	14
Larceny	12
Drunkenness	11
Disorderly Conduct	8
Drug Abuse	6
Burglary	5
Simple Assault	5
Fraud	3
Aggravated Assault	3
Vandalism	2
Weapons Offenses	2
Runaways	2
Robbery	1
Motor Vehicle Thefts	1
Rape	*
Murder	*
Kidnapping	*
Other	25
Total	100%

*Less than one percent

Source:
Crime in America 1980, compiled
by the FBI and published by
the Government Printing Office.
Unless otherwise noted, this is the source
of all FBI crime statistics cited in this report.

TABLE 3

Serious Crimes on 1981 TV Entertainment Programs compared to 1980 Reports (%).

	TV	FBI
Murder	36	*
Rape	3	*
Kidnapping	15	*
Aggravated Assault	[illegible]	5
Robbery	[illegible]	4
Burglary	6	28
Larceny-Theft	[illegible]	62
Total	100%	100%
Violent Crime	88	10
Property Crime	12	90
Total	100%	100%

* Less than one percent

Note: Figures are percentages of all FBI crime index, listings; larceny category includes motor vehicle theft.

TABLE 4

Crime Rate by Sex Comparison of TV Entertainment and FBI Arrest Reports (%)

	All Crime		Violent Crime	
Sex	TV	FBI	TV	FBI
Male	89	84	90	90
Female	11	16	10	10
	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 5

Crime Rate by Age Group. Comparison of TV Entertainment and FBI Arrest Reports (%)

	All Crime		Serious Crime		Violent Crime	
Age	TV	FBI	TV	FBI	TV	FBI
Under 18	6	21	7	36	8	19
18-30	18	49	18	46	18	55
30-50	57	23	59	15	59	23
Over 50	19	7	16	3	15	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 6

Crime Rate by Race. Comparison of TV Entertainment and FBI Arrest Reports.

	All Crime		Serious Crime		Violent Crime	
Race	TV	FBI	TV	FBI	TV	FBI
White	88	74	88	65	90	54
Nonwhite	12	26	12	35	10	46
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 7

Crime rate distribution by occupation on TV entertainment programs (%)

	All Crime	Homicide
Gangsters*	36	31
Businessmen*	24	26
Police	13	6
Professionals	8	11
Blue Collar	5	5
Other Flunkies	5	11
Other	9	10
	100	100

* Includes flunkies who were ordered to commit crimes by bosses in these occupational categories.

TABLE 8

Crime Rate by Economic Status
on TV Entertainment Programs (%)

Status	All Crimes	Homicides
Poor	3	0
Middle Class	4	8
Wealthy	16	20
Unknown	77	72
	100%	100%

TABLE 9

Crime Rate by Recidivism on the TV Entertainment Programs (%)

First Offender	10
Habitual Criminal	46
Unknown	44
	100%

TABLE 10

Crime Rate by Motive on TV Entertainment Programs (%)

Motive	All Crimes	Homicides
Greed	74	75
Personal Vendetta	6	9
Mental Imbalance	3	1
Political	2	1
Sexual	6	6
Sympathetic	4	2
Accidental	1	2
Unexplained	4	4
	100%	98%

TABLE 11

Murder Circumstances/Motives, 1980 FBI Statistics

Felony Total	17.7
Robbery	10.8
Narcotics	1.7
Sex Offenses	1.5
Other Felony	3.7
Suspected Felony	6.7
Argument Total	44.7
Romantic Triangle	2.3
Influence of Alcohol/Narcotics	4.8
Property or Money	2.6
Other Arguments	35.0
Other Motives Or Circumstances	15.9
Unknown	15.9
	100%

TABLE 12

Crime Rate by Plot Resolution on TV Entertainment Programs (%)

	All Crimes	Serious Crimes	Violent Crimes
Success	8	5	4
Defeat	68	79	80
Character Chg	4	4	4
Unresolved	20	12	12
	100%	100%	100%

TABLE 13

Crimes Cleared by Arrest, 1980 FBI Statistics

	Serious Crimes	Violent Crime
Arrest	19	44
No Arrest	81	56
	100%	100%

TABLE 14

Prime Time Television Characters
with Law Enforcement Occupations (%).

Police	**71**
Patrolman	14
Sergeant	8
Lieutenant	7
Captain	6
Detective	9
Chief	3
Deputy Sheriff	8
Sheriff	7
Other	9
Lawyers	**16**
Private Practice	2
Public Interest	2
District Attorney	3
Judge	2
Other	7
Private Investigators	**8**
Government Agents	**4**
Other	**1**
Total	100%
Number of cases	373

TABLE [illegible]

Plot Functions of Law Enforcers (%).

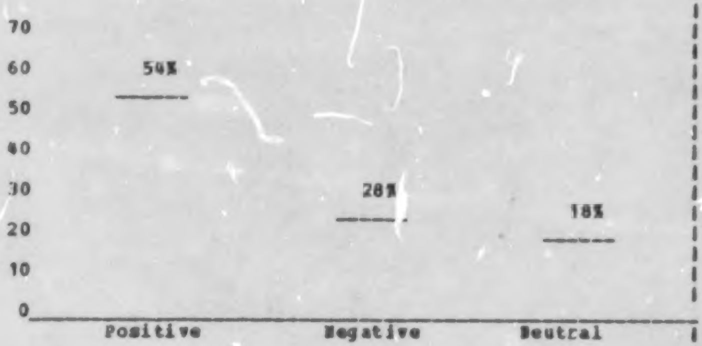

TABLE 16

Plot Functions of Law Enforcers by Network (%).

	Network		
Function	ABC	NBC	CBS
Positive	62	56	37
Negative	17	30	39
Neutral	21	14	24
	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	99	203	71

TABLE 17

Plot Functions of Law
Enforcers by Type of Role (%).

		Role	
Function	Star	Minor Regular	Single Appearance
Positive	80	51	32
Negative	14	31	38
Neutral	6	18	30
	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	112	152	109

TABLE 18

Plot Functions of Law Enforcers by Age (%).

Function	Under 30	30-50	Over 50
Positive	68	53	40
Negative	13	31	34
Neutral	19	16	26
	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	74	237	62

TABLE 19

Plot Functions of Law Enforcers by Race (%).

	Race	
Function	White	Nonwhite
Positive	52	64
Negative	31	13
Neutral	17	23
	100%	100%
Number of cases	318	55

TABLE 20

Plot Functions of Law Enforcers by Occupation (%).

Function	Occupation: Police	Occupation: Lawyer
Positive	53	44
Negative	30	31
Neutral	17	25
	100%	100%
Number of cases	263	64

Function	Private Investigator	Government Agent
Positive	93	40
Negative	0	40
Neutral	7	20
	100%	100%
Number of cases	29	15

TABLE 21

Types of Negative Functions Performed by Law Enforcers (%).

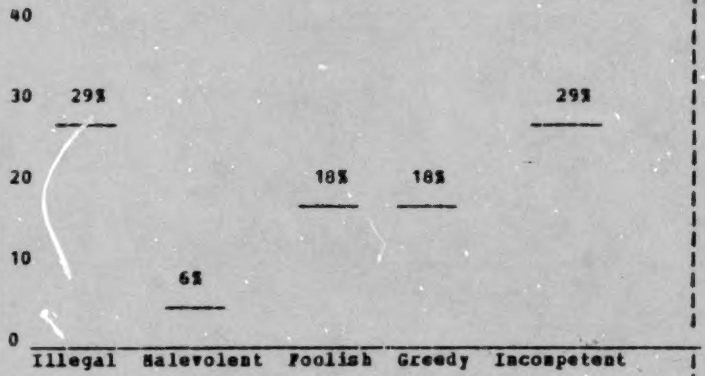

TABLE 22

Type of Negative Behavior by Occupation (%).

	Occupation		
Behavior	Police	Lawyer	Government Agent
Illegal	33	20	17
Malevolent	4	15	0
Foolish	19	15	0
Greedy	12	40	33
Incompetent	32	10	50
	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	78	20	6

TABLE 23

Types of Positive Functions
Performed by Law Enforcers (%).

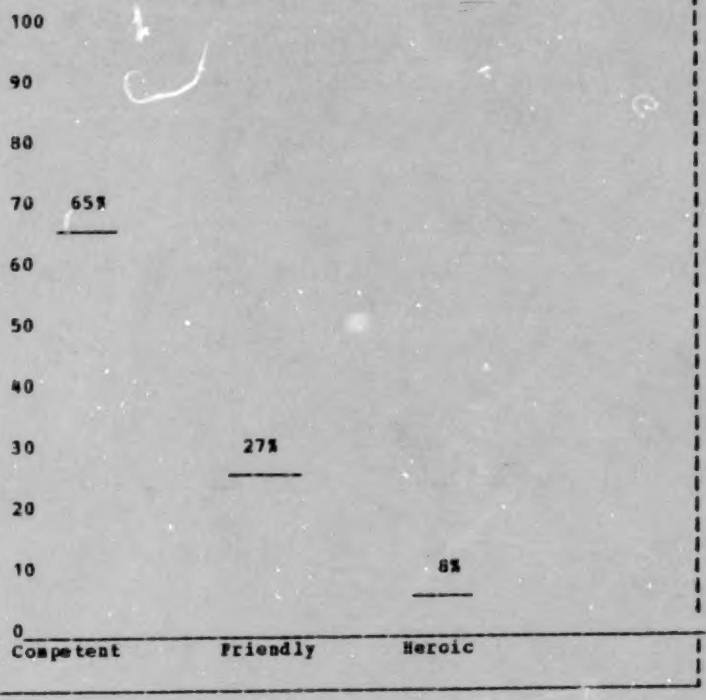

TABLE 24

Type of Positive Behavior by Role in a Series (%).

	Role		
Behavior	Star	Minor Regular	Single Appearance
Competent	72	65	51
Friendly	13	34	46
Heroic	15	1	3
	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	89	77	35

TABLE 25

All Functions Performed by [illegible] Enforcers (%)

	Percent
Positive	14
Friendly	34
Competent	4
Heroic	
Negative	8
Illegal	2
Malevolent	5
Greedy	5
Foolish	8
Incompetent	20
Neutral	100%

TABLE 26

Crime Solving Activity by Plot Function (%).

	Role in Solving Crime			
Function	Solves	Assists	Fails	Not Involved
Positive	98	84	27	38
Negative	1	14	49	35
Neutral	1	2	24	37
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of cases	75	49	66	183

TABLE 27

Crime Solving Activity by Occupation (%).

	Occupation			
Solving Crime	Role in Police	Lawyer	Private Investigator	Government Agent
Solves	19	3	62	20
Assists	14	3	28	14
Fails	21	8	7	33
Not Involved	46	86	3	33
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of Cases	263	64	29	15

TABLE 28

Crime Solving Activity by Plot Resolution (%).

	Role in Solving Crime			
Resolution	Solve	Assist	Fail	Not Involved
Success	95	87	32	34
Defeat	0	2	48	32
Char. Chge	0	2	7	2
Unresolved	5	9	13	32
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of Cases	73	47	44	122

TABLE 29

Plot Resolution by Character's Role in a Series (%).

	Role in Solving Crime		
Resolution	Star	Minor Regular	Single Appearance
Success	76	59	31
Defeat	5	25	37
Char. Chge	1	3	4
Unresolved	18	13	28
	100%	100%	100%
Number of Cases	73	47	122

TABLE 30

Plot Resolution by Occupation (%).

Resolution	Police	Lawyer	Private Investigator	Government Agent
Success	59	34	100	33
Defeat	22	20	0	67
Char. Chge	3	4	0	0
Unresolved	16	42	0	0
	100%	100%	100%	100%
Number of Cases	195	50	28	12

Appendix B

CRIME AND CRIMINALS

The following programs were coded for crime and criminals:

ABC

- Hart to Hart
  - March 3,'81
  - March 10,'81
  - March 24,'81
  - April 14,'81
  - April 21,'81
- Vegas
  - March 4,'81
  - March 11,'81
  - March 18,'81
  - March 25,'81
  - April 1,'81
  - April 15,'81
- The Greatest American Hero
  - March 18,'[illegible]
  - April 8,'81
  - April 15 '81
  - Sept. 30,'81
- 240-Robert
  - March 21,'81
- Soap
  - March 9,'81
  - March 16,'81
  - April 20,'81
- Taxi
  - April 16,'81
- I'm a Big Girl Now
  - April 10,'81
- Three's Company
  - April 14,'81
- Benson
  - March 13,'81
- Dynasty
  - March 9,'81
- Fantasy Island
  - March 28,'81
  - April 18,'81
- Barney Miller
  - March 12,'81
  - March 19,'81
  - March 26,'81
  - April 2,'81
  - April 16,'81
- Mork and Mindy
  - April 16,'81

NBC

- Facts of Life
  - April 15,;81
- Sheriff Lobo
  - March 3,'81
  - March 10,'81
  - March 24,'81
  - April 7,'81
  - April 21,'81
- Nero Wolfe
  - March 6,'81
  - March 20,'81
  - March 27,'81
  - April 10,'81
- Walking Tall
  - March 24,'81
  - March 31,'81
  - April 7,'81
- Chips
  - March 29,'81
  - April 5,'81
  - April 19,'81
  - Sept. 31,'81
- Flamingo Road
  - March 3,'81
  - March 10,'81
  - March 17,'81
- BJ and the Bear
  - March 10,'81
  - March 17,'81
  - March 24,'81
  - March 31,'81
  - April 7,'81
  - April 14,'81
- Gangster Chronicles
  - March 21,'81
  - April 22,'81
- Quincy
  - April 8,'81

April 17,'81

April 2,'81

Hill Street Blues
March 21,'81
March 25,'81
March 28,'81
April 4,'81
April 21,'81

CBS

Magnum P.I.
March 19,'81
March 26,'81
April 2,'81
April 16,'81
April 23,'81

Palmerstown, U.S.A.
March 31,'81
April 14,'81
April 21,'81

Trapper John, M.D.
Sept. 6,'81

White Shadow
March 2,'81

The Jeffersons
March 29,'81

House Calls
March 16,'81
April 6,'81

Knots Landing
March 26,'81

Dukes of Hazzard
March 13,'81
March 20,'81
March 27,'81
April 3,'81
April 10,'81
April 17,'81

The Incredible Hulk
March 6,'81

Lou Grant
March 16,'81

Enos
March 18,'81
April 1,'81
April 15,'81

Nurse
Sept. 30.'81

Appendix B

LAW ENFORCERS

The following programs were coded for law enforcers:

ABC

The Greatest American Hero
March 18,'81
April 8,'81
April 15,'81
Sept. 30,'81

Vegas
March 4,'81
March 11,'81
March 18,'81
March 25,'81
April 1,'81
April 15,'81

Hart to Hart
March 3,'81
March 10,'81
March 17,'81
March 24,'81
April 14,'81
April 21,'81

Fantasy Island
March 28,'81
April 18,'81

Three's Company
April 14,'81

Soap
March 9,'81
March 16,'81
April 25,'81

I'm a Big Girl Now
March 20,'81

Mork and Mindy
April 16,'81

Dynasty
March 9,'81
April 20,'81

Benson
March 13,'81
April 10,'81

240-Robert
March 21,'81

Taxi
April 16,'81

Aloha Paradise
April 15,'81

NBC

Quincy
March 4,'81
March 11,'81
March 24,'81
April 8,'81

BJ and the Bear
March 10,'81
March 17,'81
March 24,'81
March 31,'81
April 7,'81
April 14,'81

Nero Wolfe
March 6,'81
March 20,'81
March 27,'81
April 10,'81
April 17,'81

Sheriff Lobo
March 3,'81
March 10,'81
March 24,'81
April 7,'81
April 21,'81

Hill Street Blues
March 21,'81
March 25,'81
March 28,'81
April 4,'81
April 21,'81

Walking Tall
March 24,'81
March 31,'81
April 7,'81

Chips
March 24,'81
April 5,'81
April 19,'81
Sept. 13,'81

Little House on the Prairie
March 9,'81

Harper Valley P.T.A.
March 6,'81
March 20,'81
March 27,'81
April 17,'81

Flamingo Road
March 3,'81
March 10,'81
March 17,'81
April 2,'81

Gangster Chronicles
March 21,'81
April 22,'81

Facts of Life
April 15,'81

Brady Brides
March 27,'81

CBS

Magnum P.I.
March 19,'81
March 26,'81
April 2,'81
April 16,'81
April 23,'81

White Shadow
March 2,'81
March 16,'81

Knots
March 18,'81
April 1,'81
April 15,'81

Dukes of Hazzard
March 13,'81
March 20,'81
March 27,'81
April 3,'81
April 10,'81
April 17,'81

The Jeffersons
March 29,'81

Palmerstown U.S.A.
March 31,'81
April 14,'81
April 21,'81

House Calls
March 2,'81
March 9.'81

Trapper John, M.D.
Sept. 6,'81

The Waltons
March 19,'81

The Incredible Hulk
March 6,'81

One Day at a Time
Sept. 20,'81

Park Place
April 16,'81

Lou Grant
March 16,'81
April 13,'81

Archie Bunker's Place
March 29,'81
Sept. 20,'81

Dallas
March 27,'81
April 3,'81
April 10,'81
April 17,'81

Appendix C

HOW TV ENTERTAINMENT PORTRAYS BUSINESS*

10

The raging debate over television's effects on its huge national audience has sparked interest in how various groups are portrayed. Women, blacks, hispanics, and the elderly are among those whose portrayals have been examined.

The business world is an integral part of both American life and television entertainment. Yet television's portrayal of businessmen has not yet received the extensive attention accorded other groups.

Television's notion of a businessman may bring to mind the scheming J.R. Ewing of "Dallas," the CBS drama of a troubled Texas oil family. But is this consummate bad guy representative of businessmen on television, or is he the exception in Hollywood's world of good-natured hard-working men and women, whose businesses serve as the socially and economically productive foundation of American life?

To answer this question we analyzed the portrayals of businessmen and women during eight weeks of prime-time programs drawn equally from the 1979-80 and 1980-81 television seasons. Our "content analysis" is descriptive and does not attempt to determine the causes behind the televised image of businessmen. We are simply explaining, in a systematic and reliable fashion, what viewers see when presented with Hollywood's version of businessmen.

Businessmen proved to be a staple of prime-time entertainment, appearing in almost one out of every two shows we viewed. We coded 226 in all, of whom 43 percent appeared on CBS, 33 percent on ABC and 24 percent on NBC. Most were middle-aged males who tended to be very wealthy when their

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1* Reprinted from Linda Lichter, S.R.Lichter, and S. Rothman, "How Show Business Shows Business," Public Opinion, Oct/Nov 1982.

economic status was known. According to Hollywood, the typical businessmen inhabits a beautifully furnished estate, is pampered by servants, and sports expensive jewelry and clothing. Not a single businessman in the study was working class or poor.

In TV's continuing struggle between the forces of good and evil, businessmen came down squarely on the side of the bad guys. Sixty percent were portrayed negatively compared to only 28 percent who were shown as positive. The remaining 12 percent occupied neutral roles.

Moreover, this overview probably understates the negative image of the business world that is beamed nightly into America's living rooms. This becomes apparent when we examine the specific types of negative and positive portrayals, for TV's bad businessmen are nastier than good businessmen are admirable. Among those portrayed positively, only 10 percent showed that their work as businessmen contributes to society's economic or social benefit. In one of the few such instances, millionaire Jonathan Hart of "Hart to Hart" financed a project to increase world food production. But this character's connection to the business world is tenuous at best, since his main activity is not running his lucrative enterprises but globtrotting in a tireless effort to solve crimes.

Another three percent of businessmen made some sort of charitable contribution. Most (87 percent) merely engaged in some form of sympathetic or helpful behavior. For example, Mrs. Pynchon, the newspaper owner on "Lou Grant," coaxed a young reporter toward a reconciliation with her mother.

Businessmen's negative traits were somewhat more diverse. Of the bad guys, the single largest group, 35 percent, did something illegal. In fact TV's businessmen were seven times more likely to break the law than to contribute to society's economic well-being. Another sizeable group, 32 percent, were greedy or otherwise self- centered. Twenty-one percent played the fool, mainly in sitcoms, and the remaining 12 percent were portrayed as malevolent.

Among businessmen on television there is no shortage of criminals. On a "Barnaby Jones" episode, for example, a coffee importer fronted for a group of violent revolutionaries, while a bank manager on "Lobo" plotted the robbery of his own bank. On an episode of "Enos" an owner of several bars knowingly purchased moonshine to sell to his customers that was both illegal and dangerous. The owner of a lucrative conglomerate on the now defunct "B.J. and the Bear" dealt in illegal explosives and tried to sabotage one of his own ships to collect the insurance.

The greedy entrepreneur was exemplified by the pompous Mrs. Olesen who, with her husband, runs the general store of "Little House on the Prairie." She reneged on an agreement to buy honey from some children, forcing them to accept only half of the price she originally promised. Elsewhere, "Alice's" son begged her to seek another job because of the extremely low wages paid by her boss, who runs a diner.

Television also offers a wealth of foolish businessmen, epitomized by bar owner Archie Bunker. According to the philosophy of Bunkerism, for example, if every person shot one criminal, we could cut the crime rate in half. Then there is opinionated George Jefferson. In one episode he claimed that housewives lead lives of luxury, then nearly destroyed his fancy apartment while trying to babysit for his granddaughter in his wife's absence.

Finally, malevolence is a specialty of J.R. Ewing of "Dallas." In one segment, J.R. used his enormous influence to insure that a political enemy, whom he had already bested, did not get a needed job. Elsewhere a hotel manager on "The Jeffersons" voiced ardent dislike for blacks and expressed sadistic delight in firing employees.

In general, big businessmen fared worse than small businessmen. Executives and managers topped the list of bad guys with a 74 percent negative rating. Among presidents and heads of large companies and corporations, 64 percent were negative. Small businessmen fared somewhat better, although a majority (51 percent) were shown negatively. Similarly, small business received the highest positive rating of 33 percent. Still, this pales by comparison to the predominant negative rating for those on all rungs of the business ladder.

It would seem that no specific group of businessmen could escape the onus television bestows upon their profession. But this does not convey the full story, for different types of businessmen engaged in varied kinds of negative activities. The worst offenders were the heads of big businesses. Over half the corporate leaders portrayed in a negative light (53 percent) committed an illegal act. Thus, the owner of a chemical company on the short-lived "Walking

Tall" used his facilities to manufacture and distribute illegal drugs. Of course, J.R. Ewing of "Dallas" reveled in crimes ranging from illegal land deals and political dirty tricks to prostitution. He told one sexual partner that he liked his women on a "cash and carry basis."

In contrast, the negative activities of executives and managers were about equally divided among illegal, malevolent, foolish and greedy acts. Of all businessmen, this group was the most likely to be driven by pure malevolence. Among them was the odious Louie, the cab company manager on "Taxi." He encouraged one of his cabbies to pursue an unsuccessful boxing career even though he knew it would endanger the man's health. Another cabbie, who supposedly enjoyed Louie's good opinion, he dubbed "aardvark nose."

Approximately two-thirds of small businessmen shown as negative were either foolish or self-interested, and 23 percent committed a crime. Among these self-interested small entrepreneurs was a licentious dry cleaner owner on "Nurse" who unsuccessfully harrassed his female customers.

Rich businessmen were portrayed in a slightly more negative light than their middle class counterparts, although the difference was not overwhelming. The onus of wealth is evident, however, when viewed in light of their specific negative traits. Almost half the negative rich businessmen did something illegal, while about half the negative middle class businessmen were merely foolish.

Accordingly, the multimillionaire owner of a football franchise was enmeshed in a web of illegal financial transactions, kidnapping and murder. Compared to this example of high finance, Archie's "Bunkerisms" and George Jefferson's social climbing are far down on the scale of offenses.

The context of a businessman's activity was another key to understanding his portrayal. Businessmen were at their worst when performing purely business functions. Sixty-seven percent of those engaged in business activities were negative, compared to 44 percent of those involved in purely personal circumstances. In fact, those in personal circumstances were actually slightly more likely to be positive than negative (48 percent vs. 44 percent). Thus, Mrs. Pynchon, the newspaper publisher, served as a volunteer at a rescue center after a widespread disasterous fire.

In contrast, only nine percent of those in a purely business context were positive. More representative were a casino owner who ran a rigged game, a store owner who practiced deceptive advertising, and a stock broker who dealt in murder. Those combining business and personal activities fell between the two, with 54 percent negative and 36 percent positive.

Moreover, businessmen commit their most egregious offenses while on the job. This is confirmed by examining the types of negative behavior associated with their work. When doing something negative while working, businessmen were most likely to commit the worst type of offense-a crime (44%). When they erred in their personal lives, their behavior was most likely to be foolish (45 percent). When business and personal activities were combined, characters were most likely to be greedy or otherwise self-interested (37 percent).

One of the most crucial aspects of any character's portrayal on television is how he fares in his endeavors. Regardless of how he behaves, his ultimate success confers legitimacy on his acts, while defeat punishes both the evil doings of bad guys and the admirable intentions of good guys. When businessmen did something positive, they were rewarded with success 85 percent of the time. Only 5 percent of the good guys were defeated. Conversely, bad guys were much more likely to be defeated than succeed - 58 percent defeat compared to nine percent success. The rest were unresolved or repeated.

Examples of businessmen who met with success included Murray Klein, Archie Bunker's business partner, who finally convinced the narrow-minded Archie to join a committee fighting Anti-Semitism. When the benevolent Harts of "Hart to Hart" tracked kidnappers and murderers, their detective work invariably paid off. Negative businessmen, however, almost inevitably met with defeat. A real estate salesman, who smugly belittled the difficulty of housework to his wife, managed to dump a pot of spaghetti on his head when he tried to cook dinner. Similarly, the owner of a health food business who changed the expiration date on his vitamins and sold wheat germ that "moves" had his store closed by the local health department.

To summarize, in the struggle between good and evil on television, businessmen cast their lot with the bad guys. Most were shown in a negative manner - as criminals, fools or malevolent or greedy creatures. Fewer than half as many were shown as positive, and most of these were merely sympathetic or friendly in their personal lives, rather than as competent enterpreneurs or managers with a socially productive role. In fact, the closer a business character's plot function was linked to his occupational role, the worse he was portrayed.

The wealthy and big businessmen received the blackest eye of all. When big businessmen erred, they were most likely to commit a crime. Small businessmen fared only slightly better, as they were more likely to be foolish or greedy.

While television rarely showcases the virtues of America's capitalists, it shows no similar reluctance to discourse on the failings of capitalism. For example, in an episode of "Taxi," the drivers complained that their cabs had deteriorated into a dangerous condition and demanded that management make the needed repairs. But Louis, the manager, planned to doctor the company books so management would not be held responsible in the upcoming union hearing. When the cabbies protested Louie's underhanded tactics, he defended himself by telling them, "Every great businessman has done it."

Apparently, even children understand the exploitative nature of American business. On an episode of "Different Strokes," two young boys started their own business selling brownies. After accepting an order too big for them to handle, their sister offered to help if they made her a full partner. Although they desperately needed her assistance, the boys refused to include her in the partnership. Instead, they offered to pay her a meager salary as their employee. They told her their rationale: "That's what business is all about. You do the work and we get the profits."

Even the the "work ethic" that gave impetus to Western capitalism is ridiculed as "workaholism." On an episode of "The Jeffersons", for example, Lionel Jefferson was "beeped" from his office then raced off to work on the day of his new daughter's christening party, leaving his sobbing wife and disappointed guests behind. He was eventually brought back to the party by his father, who warned him, "Never put work above spending time with your family."

Sometimes the results of such obsessive behavior are more serious, as depicted in an episode of "One Day at a Time." Career-minded Ann Romano, the series' heroine, worked herself into a heart attack. Threaded with tubes and surrounded by heart monitoring equipment, she received a stern lecture from her doctor on the virtues of moderation. The workaholic may also work himself right out of a job. On an episode of "The Ropers," a real estate salesman drove himself so hard to win a promotion that he fell asleep during the crucial job interview.

If American business has redeeming social values, they rarely surface on prime-time television. Rather, businessmen are cast as evil and selfish social parasites whose efforts to secure "more" are justly condemned and usually thwarted. Television has blurred the important distinction between selfish and self-interested behavior. According to television, what is good for business is not likely to be good for American society.

Appendix D

BACKGROUNDS AND ATTITUDES OF THE HOLLYWOOD ELITE*

[11]

> "I think there should be no mistake about the sense of responsibility we carry ... and this has led us to believe that we can, within a framework of good showmanship, advance valid social comments, valid ethical concepts, valid generalizations about the human condition which have meaning for the audience."
>
> Sheldon Leonard
> Televison Producer

Conservatives and liberals harmonize on few issues, but they are equally vehement in criticizing television entertainment. On the liberal side, women and minority groups claim that television's unflattering portrayals of them perpetrate negative stereotypes. Conservatives object to the loose morality which they view as undermining the traditional American values of family, hard work and patriotism. And myriad groups, from the P.T.A. to the National Institute of Mental Health, worry that pervasive television violence is breeding aggressive individuals or even criminals.

Disagreements over the political messages of television programs and their relation to the "politics" of their creators have been equally sharp, although little hard evidence exists to bolster either side. Typical of those who view television as a conservative voice is a researcher at the prestigious Annenberg School of Communication who concludes, "The basic reality of the television world is the reality of the American middle class establishment; its morality is the conventional and rigid Sunday-school morality of the middle class."[12]

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[11] Reprinted from L. Lichter, R. Lichter, and S. Rothman, "Hollywood and America-- The Odd Couple," Public Opinion, Dec/Jan 1983.

For many who adhere to this line of thought, the personal politics of television writers and producers are similarly conservative or of small consequence because their product inevitably supports conservative values. In this view, "The production and manufacture of television drama are rooted to business interests in the United States. Consequently, the content must be produced by people who are either willing to suppress deep-seated dissident values or by people who are fundamentally in agreement with the system"[13]

On the flip side of this question, Michael Robinson writes that television programs reflect the liberal values of program creators on such topics as homosexuality, interracial marriage, and the social position of women and minorities.[14]

Similarly, Ben Stein claims that television has an antipathy toward "establishment figures" and an accompanying sympathy for the poor and minorities. Based on interviews with Hollywood writers and producers, he concluded that, "...the attitudes of the people who create television coincide almost exactly with the picture on television."[15]

In this ongoing debate, there are two crucial questions to answer. First, what are the attitudes and values of the people who create television entertainment? Is television's creative community a homogeneous group concerned with either protecting their industry's business interests or with promoting social reform? Or are they a diverse group of individuals whose different backgrounds and perspectives cancel each other out? Second, are their views on society reflected in program content? Does television entertainment contain messages about the achievements and failings of American society? If so, do they constitute a potpourri of competing values or a systematic perspective that adds up to a quasi-ideology? To answer this question we are currently examining television's social perspective by systematically analyzing large numbers of programs broadcast over the past three decades.[16]

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[12] Larry Gross, "The Real World of Television", Journal of Communications, p. 86.

[13] Muriel Cantor, Prime-Time Television (Beverly Hills, Cal.: Sage, 1980), p. 19.

[14] Michael Robinson, "Prime-Time Chic", Public Opinion 2, Mar-May 1979, pp. 42-47.

[15] Ben Stein, The View from Sunset Boulevard (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 105.

In this essay, we consider the first point at issue. Who are the creators of TV entertainment? What are their backgrounds? What do they think about American society, and how do they react to the criticisms levelled against their product? To find out, we interviewed 104 of Hollywoods most influential television writers, producers, and executives, as part of a larger study of elite groups. Since formal titles mean little in this field, we constructed a "reputational" sample by asking industry "insiders" for the names of key people.Those who assisted us ranged from Ben Stein, author of The View From Sunset Boulevard, to editorial staff members of TV Guide.

We selected only names on whose importance our sources were agreed. We then eliminated those who had not been associated with the development, production, or selection of two or more successful prime-time series. The final list consisted of approximately 350 names, from which we sampled randomly. Of 172 individuals who were contacted, 64 refused and 104 (60 percent) agreed to be interviewed.

The 104 individuals interviewed represent the cream of television's creative community. The sample includes 15 presidents of independent production companies, 18 executive producers, 43 additional producers, 26 of whom are also writers, and 10 network vice-presidents responsible for program development and selection. The remainder gave such titles as executive story consultant, program director, and story supervisor. Among those surveyed are some of the most experienced and respected members of the craft. Many have been honored with Emmy Awards, and a few are household names. Most importantly, this group has had a major role in shaping the shows whose themes and stars have become staples of our popular culture.

The social and personal backgrounds of the televison elite are summarized in Table 31 This group is populated almost exclusively by middle-aged white males. Over nine out of ten are male, and all but one out of the 104 surveyed are white. Most are in their forties and fifties; the average age is 49.

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[16] For some initial findings, see L. Lichter, R. Lichter, and S. Rothman, "How Show Business Shows Business," Public Opinion 5, Oct.-Nov. 1982, pp. 10-12; L. Lichter and R. Lichter, Prime-Time Crime (Washington D.C.: The Media Institute, 1983).

TABLE 31

Backgrounds of the TV Elite

White	99%
Male	98
From metropolitan area	82
From northeast corridor	56
Father voted Democratic	68
Father graduated college	35
Raised in Jewish religion	59
College graduate	75
Family income $200,000	63
Political liberal	75
Religion "none"	44
Regular churchgoer	7

By and large they represent an urban and cosmopolitn sector of society. Very few have roots in middle America; instead, they were raised in big cities on the east and west coasts. Seventy-three percent hail from either California or the Boston-Washington northeast corridor, with over one in three coming from New York state alone. Eighty-two percent grew up in large metropolitan areas (over 100,000 population), leaving less than one in five who made the fabled journey from small town America to Hollywood.

In many other ways, however, television's top creators have travelled far from the world of their youth. Relative to their parents (and to the average American), they are well educated, extraordinarily well paid, have adopted secular outlooks, and are politically very liberal.

They come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, although few were forced to start at the bottom of the ladder. Only 15 percent come from the blue collar backgrounds, and the largest number, 42 percent, say their fathers were businessmen. A minority of their fathers, 47 percent, had some college training, and only 35 percent obtained a degree. When asked to rate their family's economic circumstances during their youth as below average, average, or above average, they were evenly divided, with about one in three choosing each category.

Not surprisingly, these writers, producers, and executives are much better educated than their parents. Over nine out of ten attended college, three fourths received degrees, and 31 percent had some graduate training. These educational advances pale before the dramatic rise in their economic status. Of those who responded, one in four reported a 1981 family income in excess of half a million dollars, and almost two thirds (63 percent) earned over $200,000. Only four percent reported incomes of less than $75,000. Granting that these are the most successful practioners of their craft, few occupations offer similar financial rewards. By contrast, the average American family earned $22,000 in 1981. Moreover, these figures probably understate the wealth of this group. An unusually high proportion, 22 percent, refused to divulge their incomes. Of this group, most were associated with shows currently running in prime-time or in syndication.

The television elite have traversed considerable distances in their attitudes as well as their circumstances. In the sphere of religion, they have moved toward a markedly more secular orientation. Ninety-three percent had a religious upbringing, the majority (59 percent) in the Jewish faith. An additional 25 percent were raised in some Protestant denomination, and the remaining 12 percent as Catholics. Currently, however, 45 percent claim no religious affiliation whatsoever, more than six times the number of those who were not raised in any religious tradition. This is also greater than the proportion who currently ascribe to any particular religion. Defections have occurred from all religions, so that only 38 percent now call themselves Jews, 12 percent remain Protestants, and 5 percent have retained their Catholic faith. Moreover, most of those remaining affiliations appear to be purely nominal. Ninety-three percent say they seldom or never attend religious services.

Politically,the television elite is drawn from liberal and Democratic backgrounds. A plurality grew up in politically liberal households where politics was a common topic of discussion. Forty-six percent characterize their father's political views as left of center, 18 percent as middle of the road, and 36 percent as conservative. Of course, children's judgements of their parents' attitudes are often unreliable. Recollections of parental party affiliations are more trustworthy, and less subjective. Over two thirds (68 percent) recall that their fathers were affiliated with the Democratic party. Only 19 percent were Republicans, and the remainder were either independent or adherents of minor parties. In addition, many of their families were politically oriented. Two out of three recall that their parents discussed politics at least occassionally, including 26 percent who remember politics as a frequent topic of conversation. Only 32 percent say that political matters were seldom or never discussed at home.

Whether or not their parents imparted their own commitments, a large majority of the television elite now consider themselves liberals and regularly vote Democratic. Seventy- five percent describe themselves as left of center politically, compared to only 14 percent who place themselves to the right of center, This contrasts sharply with the national picture. In a 1982 national poll, only 27 percent of the general public classified themselves as liberal, 32 percent termed themselves conservatives, and the remainder called themselves moderates. In response to similar poll questions over the past two decades, self-described conservatives have always cutnumbered liberals, and the latter have never accounted for more than 29 percent of those questioned.

The television elite's ideological self descriptions are reflected in their political behavior. Table 32 shows how they voted in presidential elections since 1968. In the past four elections, among those voting, Democrats outpolled Republicans by margins that never dropped below three to one and rose above five to one. No Republican presidential candidate received more than 25 percent of this group's votes. In 1972, Nixon racked up 62 percent of the vote nationwide, but among the television elite the landslide flowed in the other direction-they supported McGovern by a margin of 82 to 15 percent. In 1980, there were substantial defections from the Democratic ranks here as elsewhere, and Carter received only 50 percent of their votes. But the beneficiary was not Ronald Reagan, who polled only 20 percent of this group. Instead, the disillusioned Democrats switched to John Anderson, whose 27 percent total put him well ahead of Reagan.

The television elite's liberal self-image and presidential selections are consistent with their attitudes on a wide range of social and political issues, as Table 33 reveals. We questioned them on four kinds of topics: economic issues, political and social authority, disadvantaged groups, and sex and morality.

In the realm of economics, these wealthy liberals do not reject the private enterprise system, although many favor expansion of the welfare state. Seven out of ten believe that the government should substantially reduce the income gap between the rich and the poor, a policy which would surely reduce their own incomes, and 44 percent think the government should guarantee employment to anyone who wants a job.

TABLE 32

Presidential Voting Record of the TV Elite: 1968-80

1968	
Nixon	17%
Humphrey	80
1972	
Nixon	15
McGovern	82
1976	
Ford	25
Carter	72
1980	
Reagan	20
Carter	49
Anderson	27

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[a] Three to four percent voted for minor party candidates

For most, however, this economic liberalism does not shade over into radicalism. Instead they support the private enterprise system that has been so good to them. Ninety-four percent support the notion that people with more ability should earn more, implicitly rejecting the Marxist principle, "from each according to his ability to each according to his need." Eighty-one percent reject public ownership of corporations; indeed almost two thirds believe less government regulation of business would be good for the country. Finally, over two out of three see the American private enterprise system as fair to workers.

If the television elite pledges allegiance to welfare capitalism, it is far more skeptical about the social and political institutions allied to this economic system. Three out of four indict our legal system as favoring the wealthy, and nearly two thirds believe that the very structure of American society causes people to become alienated from it. They are just as critical of those in positions of authority. Just under two thirds agree that public officials are not interested in the average citizen, and 82 percent reject the notion that those in authority know best. Almost half disagree strongly that one should defer to those in authority, and not a single person expressed strong confidence in authority.

TABLE 33

TV Elite Attitudes on Social Issues*

	Strong Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strong Disagree
Economics				
Government should redistribute income	24%	45%	16%	14%
Government should guarantee jobs	8	37	26	30
Big corporations should be publicly owned	6	13	14	66
Private enterprise is fair to workers	18	51	25	6
Less regulation of business is good for U.S.	20	45	25	11
People with more ability should earn more	62	32	5	1
Political Alienation				
U.S. institutions need complete overhaul	8	35	28	29
Structure of society causes alienation	16	46	25	12
U.S. legal system favors wealthy	39	37	16	8
Public officials don't care about average man	23	42	32	3
People in authority know best	0	18	39	43

-cont-

Given their widespread rejection of both American

TABLE 34

TV Elites on Social Issues* - cont

	Strong Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strong Disagree
Disadvantaged Groups				
Women are better off at home	0	8	17	75
Women should get preference in hiring	4	24	39	33
Blacks lack education to advance	28	45	20	7
Blacks lack motivation to advance	1	17	19	63
Black gains come at white expense	2	1	19	78
Blacks should get preference in hiring	4	39	32	25
Whites and nonwhites should not marry	2	13	23	62
Discrimination can be ended	5	8	23	64
Poor people are victims of circumstance	13	48	31	8
Sex and Morality				
Woman has right to decide on abortion	91	6	1	2
Homosexuality is wrong	5	15	31	49
Homosexuals shouldn't teach in schools	6	9	20	66
Adultery is wrong	16	33	32	19

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*Figures in tables do not always sum up to 100% because of rounding social institutions and their guardians, one would suspect that many in the television elite would like to see substantial changes in our society. In fact, a substantial minority of 43 percent endorses a complete overhaul of American institutions. In short, their acceptance of the economic system is tempered by a deepset alienation from the social and political system.

If the television elite's political alienation contrasts sharply with their moderate economic views, it is quite consonant with their social liberalism. They express strong support for the social advancement of women and blacks, two groups who have often criticized their portrayals in television entertainment. Over nine out of ten reject the argument that women are better off staying home than having careers. Three out of four disagree strongly, and no one strongly supports the notion that a woman's place is in the home. This sympathy for women's career aspirations, however, does not extend to support for preferential treatment in hiring. Seventy-two percent reject this type of affirmative action.

This group also pictures society as unfair to blacks, whose underpriviledged position is seen as no fault of their own. Almost three out of four agree that blacks are denied the educational opportunities they need to advance up the social ladder. An even higher proportion, 84 percent, deny that blacks lack the motivation to advance. (This sentiment extends to the poor in general. Sixty-two percent agree that most poverty is due to circumstances beyond the control of poor people.) An overwhelming 97 percent affirm that black gains do not come at the expense of whites.

Their liberalism on racial issues extends to the sometimes volatile question of intermarriage. Eighty-five percent believe whites and nonwhites should be free to marry if they so choose, and two thirds feel strongly about this principle. Such strong sentiments notwithstanding, a majority rejects preferential hiring as a means of assisting black advancement. Fourty-three percent support this policy, a larger proportion than those who supported affirmative action for women, but a minority nonetheless. Perhaps reflecting the difference between sentiment and policy, most are not sanguine that social discrimination can be ended. Only 13 percent believe that racial and religious discrimination can be ended in their lifetimes.

The television elite's social liberalism is also evidenced by their views on sex and morality, another focal point for television's critics. On such issues as abortion, homosexual rights, and extramarital sex, their views diverge sharply from traditional values. Ninety-seven percent believe that a woman has the right to decide for herself whether to have an abortion; even more striking, 91 percent agree strongly with this "pro-choice" position. Four out of five do not regard homosexual relations as wrong. Only five percent feel strongly that homosexuality is wrong, compared to 49 percent who disagree strongly. An even greater proportion, 86 percent, support the rights of homosexuals to teach in public schools. Finally, a majority of 51 percent refuse to condemn adultery as wrong. Moreover, the majority of those who feel strongly about this issue take a permissive stance; only 17 percent strongly agree that extramarital affairs are wrong. From this evidence, it would be difficult to overestimate the clash of values when television's creative community locks horns with fundamentalist Christian critics like the Moral Majority or the Coaltion for Better Television.

These findings suggest that the television elite's political aliemation is rooted in the social rather than economic issues. It is their social liberalism rather than their economic views that most clearly distinguishes them from the general public. To probe this topic more deeply, we inquired into their hopes for the future, as well as their assessments of the present. We asked them to choose goals for America to pursue for the next decade, by selecting the most important and least important goals from the following six choices:

1. Maintaining a high rate of economic growth
2. Making sure that this country has strong defense forces
3. Seeing that the people have more say in how things get decided at work and in their communities
4. Progressing toward a less impersonal, more humane society
5. The fight against crime
6. Progressing toward a society where ideas are more important than money

For the past decade, political scientist Ronald Inglehart has been presenting such choices to subjects in America and Western Europe. He classifies such choices as economic growth, national defense and crime as traditional "instrumental" values. A humane society, participation, and placing ideas above money, on the other hand, are "expressive" or "post-bourgeois" values that are gaining strength among new elite sectors in post industrial societies. In most major social groups, "post-bourgeois" choices still represent a minority position. Among leading journalists we interviewed, a very liberal elite on most issues, only one in three chose "post-bourgeois" goals as most important. Corporate executives, a more conservative elite, rejected such goals by an eight to one margin.

In sharp contrast, the television elite prefers "post-bourgeois" or "expressive" values over "instrumental" ones by almost a two to one margin, as Table 35 indicates. Of the 63 percent selecting "post-bourgeois" goals, by far the largest group, 43 percent, see a more humane society as our top priority. That is more than double the number favoring economic growth, the next most popular goal. At the other end of the scale, only three percent place such importance in a strong defense, a high priority of the Reagan administration. The other side of the coin is equally telling. When asked which goal is the least important, 60 percent chose "instrumental" goals. Once again, national defense has the dubious distinction of being considered least important by the largest number- it is the lowest priority for 37 percent. By contrast, only six percent regard a more humane society as America's least important priority.

TABLE 35

TV Elites Choices and Goals for American Society

Goals	Most Important	Least Important
National Defense	5%	37%
Economic Growth	19	13
Fight Crome	13	11
Humane Society	43	6
Ideas, Not Money	14	14
Community Participan	6	20
Totals		
Instrumental	37%	61%
Expressive	63	40

The television elite's strong preferences for expressive over instrumental social goals places them at the cutting edge of what Inglehart calls a "silent revolution" transforming the political culture of advanced industrial societies. It now becomes clearer why many feel alienated from traditional social and political institutions- they share a value orientation fundamentally different from that of the general public.

If this elite seeks new directions for American society, they would also prefer a change of directors. We asked them to rate ten leadership groups in terms of the influences each wields over American life. Then we asked them to rate the same groups according to the amount of influence each should have. The groups include such traditional forces in American life as business and labor, government agencies, the military, and religion, along with such rising contenders as the news media, blacks, feminists, intellectuals, and consumer groups. We calculated the average influence rating assigned to each group on a scale ranging from '1', meaning very little influence, to '7', representing a great deal of influence.

The findings confirm the impression that the television elite is deeply dissatisfied with the direction our society is taking and would like to alter it in profound ways. They perceive America's power structure as dominated by the media and business, who finish in a virtual dead heat at the top of the heap. These groups are followed, at some remove, by government agencies, labor unions, and the military. Consigned to lower rungs of the ladder in their view, are consumer groups, religious leaders, and intellectuals, with blacks and feminists at the very bottom.

When this group is asked for their preferences, the picture changes dramatically. The new kingpins would be consumer groups and intellectuals, followed by blacks and feminists. Business and the media fall from the top to the middle of the pack. Lowest in the pecking order would be government, religion, and the military. It would be hard to imagine a more thoroughly indictment of the social order. The television elite would diminish the influence of each of the five most influentials groups; they would increase the influence of four out of the bottom five groups. (See Table 36) They give short shrift to all the traditional sources of influence- business and labor alike, government, religion, and the military. Instead, they champion the emergence of consumers, intellectuals, black leaders, and feminists as new elites in American life.

Our results seem all of a piece. Television creators emerge as upholders of the "new liberalism" that surfaced

TABLE 36

TV Elites Ranks of Influence Among Leadership Groups

Perceived Influence	Preferred Influence
1. Media	1. Consumer Groups
2. Business	2. Intellectuals
3. Government Agencies	3. Blacks
4. Unions	4. Feminists
5. Military	5. Business
6. Consumer Groups	6. Media
7. Religion	7. Unions
8. Intellectuals	8. Government Agencies
9. Blacks	9. Religion
10. Feminists	10. Military

among upper status cosmopolitan groups in the 1960's. The crucial question, is whether this perspective influences their work. In short, does this social portrait of television's creators tell us anything about their artistic output? Ultimately, this can only be determined by systematic analysis of television entertainment. For example, we found that businessmen are mainly bad guys on TV entertainment; this is consistent with the attitudes held by the people who create these shows.[17] But much work remains before we will have an overall picture of television's social message. In the interim, we asked the creative community what they thought about the social implications of their work. Do they see themselves as pure entertainers, or as educators or even social reformers? Do they necessarily disagree with complaints that sex or violence permeate prime-time?

The results shown in Table 37 are clear and consistent. The television elite believe they have a role to play in reforming American society. They reject conservatives' criticisms of TV entertainment, while giving credence to liberals' complaints of television violence. First, television's creators make clear their preference for realism over escapist fantasy. Fully three out of four believe that TV should portray society realistically, and those who feel

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[17] L. Lichter, R. Lichter, and S. Rothman, "How Show Business Shows Business" _Public_ _Opinion_, Oct/Nov 1982, pp. 42-47.

TABLE 37

TV Elite Attitudes Toward TV Entertainment

	Strong Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strong Disagree
TV should promote social reform	21	45	21	13
TV should be realsitic	37	39	12	12
TV is too critical of traditional values	1	11	32	56
There is too much sex on TV	10	20	32	38
There is too much violence of TV	21	38	27	14

strongly agree by more than a three to one margin. Moreover, two out of three believe that TV entertainment should be a major force for social reform. This is perhaps the single most striking finding in our study. According to television's creators, they are not in it just for the money. They also seek to move their audience toward their own vision of the good society.

Thus, they reject the criticism that television is too critical of traditional values by an eight to one margin. A majority strongly disagree with this argument, and only one person strongly endorses it. Similarly, 62 percent disagree that there is too much sex on TV, as fundamentalist Christian groups have charged. By contrast, nearly 60 percent agree that television is too violent.

In sum, they view TV entertainment largely as we might expect on the basis of their social attitudes. Like many other liberal, cosmopolitan, upper status Americans, they believe sex is less of a problem than violence on television, and they see the medium as a source of needed social reform. The difference is that they are the creative force behind that very medium.

Summary

The television elite is a homogeneous group of mostly middle-aged white males. Their backgrounds and outlooks are very different from those of the middle American audiences that they entertain nightly. They hail from urban areas of both coasts, from the comfortable homes of liberal, middle-class parents, many of Jewish background. They are secular, well-educated, and enjoy enormous financial comforts which few Americans share.

Their strong self-avowed liberalism is reflected in their voting records and views on social and political issues. They are consistent Democratic voters and strongly favor expressive over instrumental goals. They view a humane society as America's most important priority and national defense as least important. They see society as most influenced by the media, business, labor, and government agencies. By contrast, they believe that the most influence should reside in consumer groups, intellectuals, blacks, and feminist leaders. They are very liberal on major social and moral issues, including race relations, abortion, homosexuality, and extramarital sex. They are alienated from society's institutions and place little faith in politicians or others in authority.

Finally, their liberal perspectives are reflected in how they view their own medium. They dispute conservative claims that television is too critical of traditional institutions and shows too much sex, although they sympathize with the objection that TV is toc violent. Perhaps most significant, they believe TV entertainment should reflect real life and be used to promote social reform. The crucial question remaining, is whether the television elite's liberal world is systematically reflected in TV entertainment. We have already seen that their dislike of businessmen is evident on prime-time shows. We must yet discover what other elements of this world view are structuring the content of America's chief means of entertainment.

Mr. Hughes. Thank you very much, Dr. Lichter

Professor Eron.

Professor Eron. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I have been engaged in the study of aggressive behavior for over 25 years. Many of those studies have dealt with the effect of television violence on aggressive behavior. As Professor Cook and Dr. Pearl pointed out, it has been demonstrated consistently in the many studies, over and over again, that there is a relation between television violence and subsequent aggressive behavior on the part of the viewer. Also, I think there is little doubt that this relation is primarily one of cause and effect.

It is true that the relation is not a powerful one that explains a major portion of the variance. However, the correlations usually obtained are certainly as high as those found in any other research with personality variables, and the fact that the association holds up under a wide variety of experimental conditions and different measurement operations increases confidence in the validity of these findings.

While, as Dr. Cook pointed out, you can never demonstrate cause and effect with certainty from nonmanipulative field studies, the integration of field studies with laboratory experiments leads to a conclusion that television viewing and subsequent behavior are causally related. Laboratory studies have shown conclusively that aggression can be induced by television viewing. The results from field studies are naturally less clear because of methodological complexities. However, causal effects in longitudinal studies have been reported over 10 years in the work that I have done with Lefkowitz and Walder, over 1 year in studies by Singer and Singer at Yale, and over 3 years in six different countries in work that Huesmann and I have done.

Milavsky and his associates, in a multiyear longitudinal study, funded by NBC, found remarkably similar results using the same analysis techniques. While their conclusion was that a "causal effect was not proven," their results are actually consistent with a cumulative causal process that produces only small changes over a few years.

For example, their causal coefficients increased as the longitudinal period increased. The same effect was found in our six-country study—in the Netherlands, in Poland, in Finland, in Australia, in the United States. The size of the correlation between television violence viewing and subsequent aggressive behavior increased as children got older, from age 6 to age 10, indicating there is a cumulative effect of continued watching of violence on television.

Other investigators have also demonstrated that violence viewing can affect behavior in this cumulative way at even earlier ages. Singer and Singer, in a study funded by ABC, followed a sample of 3- and 4-year-olds over the course of a year, measuring a number of variables at four different times, and concluded that violence is a cause of increased aggressiveness even in children at that age. The Singers state, "our data reflecting a third or fourth of the life span of preschoolers, seems to point to a causal link between watching

TV, especially programs with violent content, and subsequent aggression. Certainly our results seem to argue against attributing the later watching of violent TV fare to an aggressive trend in personality or to some third underlying factor."

Further, there is no evidence from any of our own studies that only those children who are already predisposed to being aggressive will be affected by aggression and violence on television. Children at all levels of aggression are affected. We found this to be true in our 10-year longitudinal study done in New York State, our 3-year study done in Illinois and in the replications of that study done in five other countries. In each case, if you hold the previous or characteristic aggression level of the subject constant, the relation does not diminish. In fact, in our 10-year study, if you consider those subjects who at age 8 were not aggressive but were watching violent television, by the time they were 19 they were significantly more aggressive than those subjects who at age 8 were highly aggressive but were watching less violent television.

In our earlier study, the 10 year study, when we observed the television habits of 8-year-old children in 1960, and then restudied these youngsters in 1970 when they were 19 years old, we found the TV violence effect was true only for boys. In our more recent studies with 6- and 8-year-olds in the late 1970's, we found that girls, too, are affected now. One reason may be that there now are many more aggressive females on TV whose behavior can be modeled. Also, in society at large, aggression has become a more positively sanctioned behavior for females. At any rate, while earlier we found that only 50 percent of the population of youngsters were vulnerable to the effects of violence on TV, now we have 100 percent of our youngsters vulnerable to this effect.

Intelligence is often invoked as a third variable which might explain the relation between television violence viewing and aggression. Certainly intelligence correlates with both of these variables. However, in most observational studies the researchers have measured and partialled out the effect of intelligence and still detected a significant relation. In our 3-year followup, when achievement was partialled out, we still found a significant relation between television violence viewing and aggression. For boys, the partial correlation between violence viewing and aggression, controlling for intelligence, was lower than the raw correlation, but it was still significantly positive. Essentially similar results were obtained in the five other countries in which the study was replicated.

Like intelligence, social class is a third variable which is often invoked to explain the relation between two other variables. However, in our 10-year longitudinal study, partial correlations holding social class, as measured by father's occupation, holding that constant did not alter the relation between television violence viewing and aggressive behavior. Similarly, in the recent 3-year longitudinal study, the correlation between television violence and aggressive behavior is not diminished when social class is controlled.

The same was true in the other countries as well[illegible] recent study by Milavsky and his associates is the one st[illegible] yielding somewhat different results for social class. These sociologists, using an unconventional measure of social class, found that the relation between television violence and aggression disappeared when they controlled for social class. It should be noted, however, that this was the only one of many analyses they did controlling for possible third variables, which showed a significant diminution in the relation between violence viewing and aggression. Thus, the confidence in our consistent finding that no third variable studied thus far can account for the relation between television violence and subsequent aggression in children is not diminished.

What is the effect of the area of the country or the part of the world where the study is done? Our 10-year longitudinal study was conducted in a semirural county in upstate New York from 1960 to 1970. Our recent 3-year study was done in a major urban area of the United States, Chicago, and was replicated in five countries in order to obtain wider variation of sociocultural factors and to test the generalizability of these results. While a number of researchers have reported results from other countries comparable to the ones I have reported, only a few have studied the effects of television violence with comparable methodologies in more than one country. And this is what we did.

The countries from which we have collected data in the cross-national 3-year longitudinal study—Australia, Finland, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, and the United States—lie in widely separated areas of the world, have different political and economic systems, and vary in the degree of governmental control over television programming. Although there are a number of differences in the findings from one country to another, it can be concluded that, in general, the relation between the viewing of television violence and subsequent aggressive behavior on the part of the observer is not limited by sociocultural environment. In each of the countries a positive relation between the two obtains. Further, in each of the countries the size of the relation increases as the children get older, which is evidence of a cumulative effect, the same kind of cumulative effect that Milavsky and his associates also found.

The variables I have been talking about so far have been with relatively stable factors—age, gender, IQ and social status—which act as potential limiters of the relation between television viewing and behavior. However, there are other variables, perhaps more modifiable, which also intervene in the relation between television violence and aggression. These have to do with the youngsters' so-called television habits, how frequently he watches, how much he identifies with television characters, and how realistic he believes television to be.

A violent program that is viewed only once in a while would not be expected to have as much effect as a violent program viewed regularly. Indeed, we found that the more frequently a youngster watches violence, the more frequently he watches his favorite violent programs, the more aggressive he becomes. These results suggest, I think, why the movies on which those of us in older generations were raised did not have the same deleterious effect on us as television is now having on young people. The serials that we attended, the Saturday matinees, they certainly were violent. The shoot-em-up westerns, the Three Stooges, which in their reruns are still among the most aggressive programs on television, were with us then. But the children weren't exposed as often as youngsters are today. It is the incessant, inexorable, ubiquitous nature of day-to-day television exposure that appears to have a profound effect on the socialization of children.

We found also that the more youngsters identify with television characters, the more effect the television has on their behavior. We found also that the less able they are to distinguish between fantasy and reality—and this is a point that was brought out this morning by one of the Congressmen, I believe—the less clear distinctions they make between fantasy and reality generally, between what they see on television and realism as it is in life, the more they are affected by television violence.

I would like to summarize this now. Television violence affects youngsters of all ages, of both genders, at all socioeconomic levels and all levels of intelligence. The effect is not limited to children who are already disposed to being aggressive, and it is not restricted to this country. We have demonstrated that children of at least five other countries, with different political and economic systems, varying in degree of control over television programing, are also affected in their aggressive behavior by the violence they observe on television. The fact that we get the same finding of a relation between television violence and aggression in children in study after study, in one country after another, cannot be ignored. The causal effect of television violence on aggression, even though it is not very large, exists. It cannot be denied or explained away. We have demonstrated this causal effect outside the laboratory, in real life, among many different children.

We have come to believe from our studies that a vicious cycle exists in which television violence makes children more aggressive and these more aggressive children turn to watching more violence to justify their own behaviors. Statistically, this means the effect is bidirectional. Practically it means that if media violence is reduced, the level of interpersonal aggression in our society will be reduced eventually.

The one study in the face of all this contrary evidence which purports to show no causal relation between television violence and aggression bases its conclusion on one analysis in a whole series of analyses. It is the contention of those investigators that the relation disappears when social classes control. However, we reiterate, that in all of our studies, in New York, Illinois, five other countries, controlling for social class did not affect the causal relation between television violence and aggression.

Finally, our studies have been criticized because it is said that the kind of aggression in children that seems to be affected is no more than boisterousness and incivility. It is true that our original criterion measure of aggression as manifested in the classroom does not directly measure violent crime. However, this measure of classroom acting out does predict over 22 years to the number and seriousness of criminal arrests, the number of traffic accidents and moving violations, convictions for driving while impaired, and extent of spouse abuse. Thus, the measure of aggression used in these studies with children does reflect the kind of behavior with which this subcommittee is concerned. These are not just trivial behaviors. They are predictive of violence and crime.

Thank you.

[The statement of Leonard Eron and Rowell Huesmann follows:]

April 13, 1983

Statement of Leonard D. Eron, Ph.D. and L. Rowell Huesmann, Ph.D.
University of Illinois at Chicago to the Subcommittee on Crime of the House Committee in the Judiciary

The Role of Television in the Development of Antisocial Behavior

We have been engaged in the study of aggressive behavior in children for over 25 years. One of us published the first report of a large scale field study implicating television violence as a likely cause of aggression in children (Eron, 1963). One of us wrote the chapter on television violence and aggressive behavior for the NIMH report on Television and Behavior: Ten years of scientific progress (Huesmann, 1982), and both of us were coauthors of the research which has been characterized as "seminal" in the original Surgeon General's report on Television and Social Behavior (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesmann, 1972). This study documented the effect of television violence over 10 years on a large group of young persons first observed when they were eight-years-old. Our research on the effect of television violence on behavior continues into the present. We have recently completed a three-year follow-up study of 700 youngsters in Illinois. This study has now been replicated in five other countries, Australia, Finland, Israel, the Netherlands, and Poland (Eron, Huesmann, et al 1983; Huesmann, Eron et al., in press; Huesmann, Lagerspetz and Eron, in press). We also have recently completed a 22-year follow-up on the subjects described in the Surgeon General's Report (Eron and Huesmann, in press). We will be referring to all of these studies in this statement as well as to research done by a number of other investigators.

That there is a consistent relation between television violence viewing and subsequent aggressive behavior on the part of the viewer is no longer disputed, having been demonstrated many times both in the laboratory and in field investigations (Huesmann, 1982; Lefkowtiz and Huesmann, 1981). Also, there is little doubt that this relation is primarily one of cause and effect. True, the relation is not a powerful one that explains a major portion of the variance. However, the correlations usually obtained are certainly as high as those found in any other research with personality variables, and the fact that the association holds up under a wide variety of experimental conditions and measurement operations increases confidence in the validity of the findings.

While one can never demonstrate cause and effect with certainty from non-manipulative, field studies, the integration of field studies with laboratory experiments leads to a conclusion that television viewing and subsequent behavior are causally related. Laboratory studies have shown conclusively that aggression can be induced by television viewing. The results from field studies are naturally less clear because of methodological complexities. However, causal effects in longitudinal studies have been reported over ten years (Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz, and Walder, 1972), over one year (Singer and Singer, 1981) and over three years in six countries (Huesmann, Lagerspetz, and Eron, in press). Milavsky, Kessler, Stripp, and Rubens (1982), in a multi-year longitudinal study, funded by NBC, found remarkably similar results using the same analysis techniques. While their conclusion was that a "causal effect was not proven", their results are actually consistent with a cumulative causal process that produces only small changes over a few years. For example, their causal coefficients increased as the longitudinal period increased. The same effect was found in our six-country study.

Obviously, television violence does not have the same effect on everybody. Some high violence viewers are unaggressive and some low violence viewers are aggressive. Under what conditions, and by what processes, does the effect of television on aggressive behavior become manifest, and how is the effect exacerbated and/or mitigated? The factors we have investigated are age, gender, IQ, social status, and socio-cultural environment. Also important are the amount of time spent viewing television (frequency of viewing), identification of viewer with TV characters, and how realistic the viewer believes television programs are. We will briefly summarize the evidence for how each of these variables influences the relation between television violence and behavior.

Age

From results of our earlier studies (Eron, Huesmann, Lefkowitz, and Walder, 1972; Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesmann, 1977) in which we followed a large group of subjects from age 8 to 19, we surmised that there must be a sensitive period in a child's development, probably around age 8 to 12, when youngsters are especially susceptible to the influence of violent television. This surmise was based on our finding that there was no relation between the violence of programs these subjects watched at age 19 and their aggressive behavior at that time, although there had been a significant contemporaneous relation for the same subjects at age eight. Further, the correlation over time was larger than the early contemporaneous one. This suggested there might be a cumulative effect at least into late childhood or the early adolescent years.

To check on these suppositions and to determine the boundaries of this sensitive period, we undertook a new three-year longitudinal study in which we investigated the television habits and aggressive behaviors of a group of 672 youngsters in Oak Park, Illinois, a socially and economically heterogeneous suburb of Chicago, and 86 children from two inner city parochial schools in Chicago (Eron, Huesmann, Brice, Fischer and Mermelstein, 1983; Huesmann, Eron, Klein, Brice and Fischer, in press). Half of the subjects were in the first grade (age six) and half in the third grade (age eight) at the beginning of the date collection. During the first year of the study, the youngsters were tested in their classrooms with a variety of paper and pencil procedures and their parents were interviewed individually. The children were subsequently tested again in both the second and third years of the study with the same procedures. With this overlapping, longitudinal design, it was possible to separate age effects from cohort effects and trace the development of both television habits and aggressive behavior as well as the relation between them from age six to age ten. This study has been or is now being replicated in five other countries, Finland, Poland, Australia, the Netherlands and Israel (Huesmann, Lagerspetz and Eron, in press).

In general, we found that indeed the relation between television violence viewing and aggression is already emerging at age six, but the relation is not as substantial and consistent across samples of that age as in samples of 9 to 11-year-olds. Such a finding is consistent with the theory that the effect of violence is cumulative (Eron, Huesmann, Brice, Fischer and Mermelstein, 1983). Other investigators have also demonstrated that violence viewing can affect behavior at even earlier ages. Singer and Singer (1981) followed a sample of three and four-year-olds over the course of a year, measuring a number of variables at four different times and concluded that violence is a cause of increased aggressiveness even in children at that age. The Singers state, "our data reflecting a third or fourth of the life span of preschoolers seems to point to... (a) causal link between watching TV, especially programs with violent content and subsequent aggression. Certainly, our results seem to argue against attributing the later watching of violent TV fare to an aggressive trend in personality or to some third underlying factor." (Singer and Singer, 1981, p. 115).

As for the upper end of this susceptibility age range, we had argued (Eron, et al., 1972) that once an individual has reached adolescence, behavioral predispositions and inhibitory controls would have become so crystallized that it would be difficult for television to influence patterns of characteristic behavior such as aggression. However, more recently, Belson (1978) collected data on 1650 teen age boys in London and concluded that "the evidence is very strongly supportive of the hypothesis that high exposure to television violence increases the degree to which boys engage in serious violence (p. 15)." Also, in a study of adolescents in the United States, Hartnagel, Teevan and McIntyre (1975) found a significant, though low, correlation between violence viewing and aggressive behavior. Thus, it seems likely that television violence is a cause of aggressive behavior over a wider age spectrum than previously suspected.

However, because of a number of converging developmental trends, as demonstrated in our recent developmental study (Eron, Huesmann, Brice, Fischer, and Mermelstein, 1983), it is likely that children around age eight in the United States are especially susceptible to the influence of violent television. From grades 1 to 5, children are becoming increasingly aggressive: also during that period the amount of television violence viewed increases from grade 1 to 3 and then starts to decline. However, the child's perception of televised violence as realistic declines from grades 1 to grade 5. Thus, in the United States, the third grade may be the center of an especially sensitive period when the factors are just right for television violence to have an effect. Some of the strongest relations between television violence and both simultaneous and later aggression have been reported for children about this age (Chaffee, 1972; Lefkowitz, et al., 1977). Interestingly, however, the developmental trends for aggression, violence viewing and realism are somewhat different in some of the other countries investigated. Thus, one effect of the specific socialization processes employed in a culture may be to alter the time of the sensitive period when television can have its greatest effects.

Predisposition to Aggression

There is no evidence from any of our studies that only those children who are already predisposed to being aggressive will be affected by aggression and violence on television. Children at all levels of aggression are affected. We found this to be true in our 10-year-longitudinal study done in New York State, our three-year study done in Illinois and in the replications of that study done in five other countries. In each case, if you hold the previous or characteristic aggression level of the subject constant, the relation does not diminish. In fact, in our 10-year study, if you consider those subjects who at age 8 were not aggressive but were watching violent television, by the time they were 19 they were significantly more aggressive than those subjects who at age 8 were highly aggressive but were watcning less violent television (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder and Huesmann, 1977).

Gender

What are the limits on the relation between television violence and aggression set by gender? In our 1960 to 1970 longitudinal study, we had found a significant effect for boys but not for girls. During this same period, Schuck (1971) had found similar differences between boys and girls in aggressive behavior after listening to a violent radio broadcast. One explanation for this difference in effects on boys and girls was that in 1960, when the measures were taken originally, there were no female aggressive models for girls to imitate. From an observational learning point of view, all other things being equal, the most effective models would be those most similar to the observer. And, in 1960, females on television served only as objects of violence or passive observers. A more complex social learning point of view would implicate the kinds of behavior which are reinforced in young girls as they grow up to become adolescents and adults. In the United States, at least during the period that these girls were growing up and learning their social roles - in the middle or late 50s - girls were discouraged from being aggressive and participating in masculine like, large muscle activities. Thus, aggressive behavior was not relevant for them and would not easily be incorporated into their repertoire of problem solving behaviors. Also, girls who, as has been known, learn to speak and read earlier than boys are more apt to engage in fantasy type activities and imaginative play. As Singer and Singer have demonstrated (1981), prosocial imaginative play is related to reduced aggression. Also, the increased use of fantasy may lead to a greater appreciationof the distinction between fantasy and reality. In 1960 and 1970, girls believed television was less realistic than did boys (Lefkowitz et al., 1977). Further, those girls who believed television was realistic were more aggressive than girls who did not believe television was realistic and were more like boys in other ways (e.g., they preferred boys' games to girls' games and like to watch contact sports on television). Thus, it would seem that gender is a limiting factor in the relation between television and aggression to the extent that girls adopt traditional roles and eschew masculine-type activities.

In our more recent three-year longitudinal study, we included measurements to evaluate the relative merits of the observational learning and gender role learning explanations for the discrepancy between the boys and girls in the television violence-aggression relation. However, we found that now there is an overall significant positive relation between the violence of the television programs a young girl watches and how aggressive she is judged to be by her peers. Even though boys in general obtain higher aggression scores than girls and also watch significantly more violent television, the correlation between the two variables is now actually higher for girls than for boys indicating they are now even more affected by television violence than are boys. Further, a multiple regression analysis indicates that no matter what the initial level of aggression of girls, those who watch more television violence are likely to become more aggressive than those who watch less. However, as mentioned above, these more recent data do not support a conclusion of undirectional casuality. Regressions predicting TV violence viewing from aggression revealed that those girls who are more aggressive also are more likely to become heavier violence viewers regardless of their initial level of violence viewing. The bidirectionality of the effect suggests that a simple observational learning model is not sufficient to explain the correlation between violence viewing and aggression for girls. It should be noted that while there were similar findings of a positive correlation for girls in Poland and the Netherlands, the finding was not replicated in Finland and Israel in all grades, although it was in some grades.

It does not seem likely that the current relation between a girl's aggression and her violence viewing is due to the presence of more aggressive female models on TV programs now than when the previous longitudinal study was done, although there are indeed many more such models. To test the influence of gender of TV characters on the obtained relation, television programs were scored for the amount of violence perpetrated by males and females. We found that, regardless of the child's gender, there were higher correlations between the child's aggressiveness and the child's viewing of a male character's violence than between aggressiveness and the child's viewing of a female character's violence. This apparently greater influence of male models on children has been detected in the data from other countries as well. Thus, it does not seem reasonable to attribute the emergence of a relation between violence viewing and aggression in girls to the more recent appearance of aggressive female models on TV. But why should the correlations between television viewing and aggressive behavior now be even higher for girls than for boys? One possibility is that girls, who have a much lower average level of aggressiveness and are exposed less often to aggressive models in their everyday interactions, have a greater potential for television violence to change their behavior.

Intelligence

Intelligence is often invoked as a third variable which might explain the relation between television violence viewing and aggression. Certainly, intelligence correlates with both these variables. However, in most observational studies, the researchers have measured and partialed out the effect of intelligence and still detected a significant relation. In our three-year follow-up, when achievement was partialled out, we still found a significant relation between television violence viewing and aggression. For boys, the partial correlation between violence viewing and aggression, controlling for achievement, was lower than the raw correlation, but it was still significantly positive. Essentially similar results were obtained in the other countries in which the study was replicated.

Social Status

Like intelligence, social class is a third variable which is often invoked to explain the relation between two other variables. However, in our 10-year longitudinal study, partial correlations holding social class, as measured by father's occupation, constant did not alter the relation between television violence viewing and aggressive behavior. Similarly, in the recent three-year longitudinal study, the correlation between television violence and aggressive behavior is not diminished when social class is controlled. The same was true in the other countries as well. The recent study by Milavsky et al (1983) is the one study yielding somewhat different results for social class. These sociologists, using an unconventional measure of social class, found that the relation between television violence and aggression disappeared when they controlled for social class. It should be noted, however, that this was the only one of many analyses they did controlling for possible third variables, which showed a significant diminution in the relation between violence viewing and aggression. Thus, the confidence in our consistent finding that no third variable studied thus far can account for the relation between television violence and subsequent aggression in children is not diminished.

Socio-Cultural Environment

What is the effect of the area of the county or part of the world where the study is done? Our 10-year longitudinal study was conducted in a semi-rural county in upstate New York from 1960 to 1970. Our recent 3-year study was done in a major urban area of the USA (Chicago) and was replicated in 5 countries in order to obtain wider variation of socio-cultural factors and test the generalizability of the results. While a number of researchers have reported results from other countries comparable to those reported above for the USA (e.g., Belson, 1978; Gransberg & Steinbring, 1980; Krebs and Groebel, 1977; Murray and Kippax, 1977; Williams, 1978; only a few have studied the effects of television violence with comparable methodologies in more than one country (e.g., Parke, Berkowitz, Leyens, West and Sebastian, 1977).

The countries from which we have collected data in the cross-national three-year longitudinal study (Australia, Finland, Israel, Netherlands, Poland, and USA) lie in widely separated areas of the world, have different political and economic systems and vary in degree of governmental control over television programming. Although there are a number of substantial differences in the findings from one country to another, it can be concluded that in general, the relation between the viewing of television violence and subsequent aggressive behavior on the part of the observer is not limited by socio-cultural environment. In each of the countries, USA, Finland, Poland, Australia, the Netherlands, and Israel, a positive relation between the two obtains. Further, in each of the countries, the size of the relation increases as the children get older - which is evidence of a cumulative effect, the same kind of cumulative effect that Milavsky and his associates (1983) also found.

So far we have considered some relatively stable factors (i.e., age, gender, IQ and social status) as potential limiters of the violation between television viewing and behavior. However, there are other variables, perhaps more modifiable, which also intervene in the relation between television violence and aggression. These have to do with the youngsters' so called television habits, how frequently he watches, how much he identifies with the television characters and how realistic he believes television to be.

Intensity of Viewing

One important mediating variable obviously would be the intensity with which a child watches television in general and particularly the intensity with which he or she watches violent programs. A violent program that is viewed only once in a while would not be expected to have as much effect as a violent program viewed regularly. While older studies (Eron, 1963; Eron et al., 1972; Robinson and Bachman, 1972) had found no relation between total amount of viewing and aggression, McCarthy, Langer, Gerstein, Eisenberg and Orzeck (1975) reported that frequency of viewing was related to aggression. Similarly, two studies which were done in areas where television was recently introduced (Granzberg and Steinbring, 1980; Williams, 1978), both suggested that frequency of viewing was a crucial variable. In these and the McCarthy, Langer, Gerstein, Eisenberg and Orzeck (1975) study, amount of television viewed appeared to be a critical potentiating variable in eliciting the relation between violent television and aggressive behavior.

In our more recent three-year longitudinal study, the results support this interpretation of frequency as a potentiating variable. The correlations between intensity of viewing and peer-nominated aggression were positive and significant. A program that is viewed once in a while does not have a significant effect on a child's aggressiveness, no matter how violent the program is. In fact, a violence viewing score unweighted for frequency did not correlate at all with aggressiveness. It may be, as some arousal theorists have argued, that excessive viewing, regardless of content, stimulates aggressive behavior. Studies cited by Dorr (1982) indicate that aggressive behavior may result as much from arousal produced by hectic sequences in both the commercials and the programs as from specific imitation of aggressive acts. Singer and Singer (1981) demonstrated that children who were consistently heavy viewers of the more frenetic type of programming such as the "Gong Show" and even "Sesame Street" showed increased aggressive behavior in the nursery school three months or more later. These results suggest why the movies, on which older generations were raised, did not have the same deleterious effect on young moviegoers as television. The serial movies, the Saturday matinees were certainly violent. The "shoot 'em up Westerns", and "The Three Stooges", which in their reruns are still among the most aggressive programs on television, were with us then; but the children weren't exposed as often as youngsters are today. It is the incessant, inexorable, ubiquitous nature of day-to-day television exposure that appears to have a profound effect on the socialization of children.

Popularity

Individual differences in popularity among one's peers may also play a role as a mediating variable in the aggression/violence viewing relation. Previous studies (Schramm, Lyle and Parker, 1961) have shown that youngsters with poor social relations spend more time watching television. Thus, it would be expected that children who are not popular among their peers watch more television. In our ten-year longitudinal study, we indeed found that the less popular child turned to watching more and more television. At the same time, the less popular child tended to be a more aggressive child. In the current cross national study, we found significant negative correlations between popularity and aggression in almost all countries and grades in both genders. One may hypothesize that the less popular child, lacking social reinforcements, watches television to obtain vicariously the gratifications denied in social interactions. Longitudinal regression analysis indicated that for both genders, unpopularity indeed led to an increase in television violence viewing.

Identification with TV Characters

While the weight of evidence seems to indicate that all viewers are most likely to imitate an heroic, white male actor, individual differences should not be ignored. It may be that some children identify much more with some actors and this identification mediates the relation between violence viewing and aggressiveness. Such an identification would be important not just in an observational learning model but also in a model which emphasized norms or standards of behavior. The more the child identifies with the actors who are aggressors or victims, the more likely is the child to be influenced by the scene, believing that the behaviors are appropriate and to be expected.

To test this theory in our three-year study, we asked each child how much he/she was like several characters on television. The characters included two aggressive males, two aggressive females, two unaggressive males, and two unaggressive females. From their responses, reliable identification scores were derived.

Not surprisingly, the identification with aggressive characters score correlated significantly with aggressiveness, particularly for boys. More interesting was the discovery that identification with aggressive TV characters interacted with violence viewing to establish an even stronger relation with aggression. Those boys who watch violent television and identify with aggressive TV characters are predictably more aggressive two years later regardless of their initial level of aggressiveness. Identification with aggressive characters seems to be a catalyst substantially increasing the effect of television violence on boys. Identification with aggressive TV characters by itself is a good predictor of aggression, but not as significant a predictor as its product with television violence viewing.

Fantasy-Reality Discriminations

Another potential mediating variable in the relation between television violence and aggressive behavior might be a child's ability to discriminate between fantasy and reality as portrayed on television. Violent scenes perceived as unrealistic by the child should be less likely to affect the child's behavior. Some evidence for this effect has been provided by Feshbach (1976). As a result, one might expect that individual differences on this variable could be very important in determining who would be most affected by television violence.

In the three-year longitudinal study, we measured children's perception of television violence as fantasy or reality by asking them "how much do you think 'program x' tells about life like it really is? Just like it really is? A little like it is? Not at all like it is?" They were asked this question about ten violent programs, and their scores were the sum of their responses for the shows they had watched.

In the earlier ten-year longitudinal study (Lefkowitz, et al., 1977) it had been found that girls thought television was significantly less realistic than boys. It was hypothesized that this might be one of the reasons for the lack of a significant longitudinal relation between violence viewing and aggression for girls at that time. In support of this hypothesis were data indicating that the more aggressive a girl was at both age 8 and 19, the more realistic she thought television was. In our current study, however, we have found that girls and boys now perceive television violence to be equally realistic (Huesmann and Eron, in press). These positive correlations ranged from .11 to .25 depending on the gender and grade of the subjects, and there were no systematic differences though, as indicated previously, the child's perception of TV violence as realistic declines dramatically with age. This adds validity to the theory that fantasy-reality discriminations also mediate the effect of TV violence on aggression since, as pointed out above, girls and boys now display an equally strong relation between violence viewing and aggression. Thus frequency of viewing violence, identification with TV characters and the tendency to interpret television as realistic would seem to be significant mediating variables in the relation between television violence and aggressive behavior in boys.

Fantasy

One final mediating variable that should be considerd is the child's use of fantasy. Some theorists have argued that a child who reacts to television violence by fantasizing about aggressive acts might actually become less aggressive (Feshbach, 1964). While no research has ever reported finding such negative correlation in a field study, this variation of a catharsis theory still raises its head from time to time. A more compelling argument exists that fantasizing about aggressive acts observed on TV through daydreaming or imaginative play should increase the probability that the aggressive acts will be performed. In support of this theory, Singer and Singer (1981) report that children who engage in more prosocial imaginative play and fantasy are less aggressive. The hypothesis is that these children have rehearsed prosocial behaviors sufficiently for them to become dominant responses.

In the current three-year cross-national study, aggressive and active-heroic fantasy were measured with the Children's Fantasy Inventory (Rosenfeld, Huesmann, Eron and Torney-Purta, 1982). On this 45-item questionnaire, children report how often they engage in different types of fantasy activity. In the Chicago sample, we found significant positive correlations between peer-nominated aggression and both fantasy variables for boys and girls. The correlation between aggression and active-heroic fantasy was the highest for girls (r=.17, p .001) and the correlation between aggression and aggressive fantasy was highest for boys (r=.20, p .001) (Huesmann and Eron, in press). These results are consonant with the hypothesis that aggressive fantasizing serves as a congitive rehearsal of aggressive acts and increases the likelihood of their emission.

A Process Model

We have been considering a number of variables which define the limits within which the effect of viewing television on the subsequent social behavior of children is operative. We turn now to a consideration of a likely model to explain how this effect comes about.

One aspect of the model has to do with arousal effects. Researchers have alluded to this process as important in activating aggressive behaviors. It has been hypothesized that a heightened state of tension including a strong physiological component, results from frequent observation of high action sequences. Arousal here is seen as both a precursor and consequence of aggression (Huesmann, 1982). Another aspect of the model has to do with the rehearsal of the behaviors the child observes on the part of his favorite TV characters. The more frequently the child rehearses the sequence by continued viewing, the more likely is it to be remembered and reenacted when the youngster is in a situation perceived to be similar. Further, by consistently observing aggressive behavior, the youngster comes to believe these are expected, appropriate ways of behaving and that most people solve problems in living that way. Norms for appropriate behavior are established and attitudes are formed or changed by observation of other persons' frequent behavior, especially if that behavior is sanctioned by authority figures (Tower, Singer, Singer and Biggs, 1979). The child who has been watching programs with primarily aggressive content comes away with the impression that the world is a jungle fraught with dangerous threats and the only way to survive is to be on the attack.

However, television's influence cannot be explained solely in terms of arousal or observational learning and the setting of norms of behavior. As we've said before, aggressive behavior is overdetermined, and the variables we've been discussing all contribute their effects. The process, however, seems to be circular. Television violence viewing leads to heightened aggressiveness which in turn leads to more television violence viewing. Two mediating variables which appear to play a role in this cycle are the child's academic achievement and social popularity. Children who behave aggressively are less popular and, perhaps because their relations with their peers tend to be unsatisfying, less popular children watch more television and view more violence. The violence they see on television may reassure them that their own behavior is appropriate or teach them new coercive techniques which they then attempt to use in their interactions with others. Thus, they behave more aggressively which in turn makes them even less popular and drives them back to television. The evidence supports a similar role for academic failure. Those children who fail in school watch more television, perhaps because they find it more satisfying than schoolwork. Thus, they are exposed to more violence and have more opportunity to learn aggressive acts. Since their intellectual capacities are more limited, the easy aggressive solutions they observe may be incorporated more readily into their behavioral repertoire. In any case, the heavy violence viewing isolates them from their peers and gives them less time to work toward academic success. And of course, any resulting increase in aggression itself diminishes the child's popularity. Thus, the cycle continues with aggression, academic failure, social failure and violence viewing reinforcing each other.

One final point has to do with the type of antisocial behavior being predicted in these studies. A criticism that has been levelled at our criterion measure of aggression as well as the measures used in other studies is that they do not tap serious antisocial or criminal behavior but at most reflect such behaviors as boisterousness and incivility. True, our original criterion measure of aggression taps into the kinds of aggressive behaviors which show up in the classroom and, although this measure samples physical fighting, stealing, and verbal abuse, it does not directly measure violent crime. However, we know from our 22-year longitudinal study that this measure of classroom acting out is predictive of number and seriousness of criminal arrests, number of traffic accidents and moving violations, convictions for driving while impaired and extent of spouse abuse (Eron & Huesmann, in press). Thus, the measures of aggression used in these studies with children does indeed indicate the kinds of behavior with which this subcommittee is concerned. These are not just trivial behaviors. they are predictive of violence and crime.

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Mr. HUGHES. Thank you very much, Dr. Eron.

First I would like to ask the panel if they would like to react to any other participants' presentations? Any comments on——

Dr. PEARL. Since I was first initially, perhaps I should be the first to comment.

I agree with most of the remarks that have been made. I think it is appropriate, as Professor Cook pointed out, to understand that effects need not be huge in order to have a significant impact. The fact that Professor Eron points out there is consistency in all kinds of research with respect to these effects I think lends serious support to the importance of the problem and the fact that these conclusions can be used as a basis for further consideration.

I do think, as was pointed out, that television portrayals can set the agenda for the beliefs of individuals concerning what they will experience in the world in the nature of law enforcement and the kinds of crimes that are apt to occur, and that these may be, as portrayed on television, far from reality.

Mr. HUGHES. Anybody else?

I think it was Professor Cook that concluded from his studies and observations, that although there is a causal relationship between violence on TV and actual violence or aggressiveness on the part of individuals, that it was a factor, but not a major factor, in the overall crime problem. Would you all agree with that?

Professor ERON. Yes; I certainly would. It would be silly for us to say that television violence is the only cause of aggression and violence and crime.

Mr. HUGHES. Not only that it is not the only——

Professor ERON. But it is of significance. I think, in study after study, we find that television violence, independently, can explain about 10 percent of the variance. Now, 10 percent is not a large number. It is small, and there is 90 percent that is not accounted for.

Mr. HUGHES. What are the major factors from your observations?

Professor ERON. Oh, I think the behavior of parents, the models that parents themselves present, is a factor. There are certain kinds of deprivations in society that might be a cause. Frustration, all kinds of things that youngsters learn from their peers, not just from television, all of those are factors. But television, in and of itself, independent of anything else, can account for 10 percent of the variance.

Mr. HUGHES. Are there any other factors such as the parent model that attributes for more of a percentage?

Professor ERON. No; I don't know of any other factor that contributes, in and of itself, more than 10 percent.

Mr. HUGHES. Would you agree with that, Professor?

Professor COOK. It depends on what you mean by a cause. Unforunately, I would think that issues of drugs, race, and socioeconomic background account for a lot more of the variance than the 10 percent Professor Eron has told you about.

Professor ERON. I would think it is not particularly race or socioeconomic factors, but the kinds of behaviors and things that individuals learn in different socioeconomic backgrounds themselves. But there are different behaviors that are learned and it is these that are important.

Dr. PEARL. I think there is a very complex interaction between socioeconomic circumstances and what kinds of behavior occurs. Within any socioeconomic level there are quite a few differences of behaviors, differences in backgrounds. Families differ in terms of the kinds of close support they may give their members, the models which they portray. I think these are important within any socioeconomic class grouping. I think it is for that reason that the whole question of television and behavior and crime generally is such a difficult one, because there are complexities that involve the interaction of a number of different things which may be predisposing but not sufficient causes and it may take several different constellations in order to really relate to the occurrence of a behavior.

Professor COOK. Could I add something on that point, if I may?

Mr. HUGHES. Yes.

Professor COOK. When I stated that the effect, in my judgment, was small, I did note that that is in studies that examined television and violence over a 3-year period. But during that 3-year period, the effect got larger and larger the longer the time period studied.

Now, most children watch television for considerably more than 3 years, so the final word is not in yet as to the amount of increased aggressiveness caused by television. My remarks were limited to 3 years of viewing violence on television.

Mr. HUGHES. Professor Eron, you alluded to the conclusions reached by Dr. Milavsky in his studies. As I understand it, your criticism of his conclusions are that, first of all, the study itself was only a very small part of the overall studies, and in his study there was not enough data to reach the conclusions that he reached.

I believe, if I understand you correctly, it is that social class isolation that provides the inability on your part to subscribe to the conclusions that he reached. Is that essentially correct?

Professor ERON. Generally that is so. I have a lot of respect for the work that Dr. Milavsky and his associates have done. It was a very careful, beautifully done study. I have no objection to that. Actually, there is very little disagreement between his actual empirical findings and ours. It is the interpretation that he puts on his findings that I do not agree with. He bases his interpretation really on one analysis in which he controlled for social class, and did this in half of his subjects by taking the social class of the parents and in the other half using the general socioeconomic level of the schools to which those children went.

Now, that is not a very good indication of each child's social class—that is not a measure that is traditionally used. The usual measure for social class is occupation of the father, education, income, that kind of a measure, individually for any one child. That is the measure that we used in our studies. We used that measure in New York State, with 875 children, in Oak Park, IL, with 750 children, and with over 1,500 subjects in these 5 other countries. And when we are using that measure, which I think is a better measure because it is related to each individual child, and the family background which that particular child has, in all of those studies we find there is no diminution in the relation between television violence and aggression when social class is controlled. That was my objection to Milavsky's findings.

Also, as Dr. Cook pointed out, there does seem to be over a 3-year period a cumulative effect, that the relation becomes stronger and stronger, and certainly in our 10-year study we found that.

Mr. **Hughes**. Another aspect of Dr. Milavsky's study—and I believe his conclusion—was that even though the antisocial effects of violence and TV are statistically significant, nevertheless it is not large enough to be meaningful in a practical sense.

What do you have to say about that?

Professor **Eron**. Oh, I think 10 percent is large enough when you think of all the crimes that are committed. Ten percent is a huge number. And as Dr. Cook pointed out, this is one area where we can do something. You can't do anything about heredity, very much, you can't do too much about socioeconomic conditions of families, you can't do much about childrearing practices, whatever it is that causes youngsters to be aggressive. But in this area, which, among all possible causes, still accounts for 10 percent, there is something that can be done.

Mr. **Hughes**. What do you think we can do as a practical matter?

Professor **Eron**. I think the level of violence on television has to be reduced somehow. The television networks have to come to the point where they admit this and they do something about it. I am not advocating any censorship or anything of that sort, but I think—the television networks have to regulate themselves the amount of violence that permit to be portrayed in their programming.

Mr. **Hughes**. As I understand their testimony—and they will be testifying very shortly—their conclusion is that there are no persuasive studies that show that causal relationship. My question would be, given the fact that we're talking about social behavior, which is very hard to measure and not the type of thing where you will find a "smoking gun" type of evidence. where the presumption is clear and convincing or beyond a reasonable doubt, as we like to say in the legal profession, what additional evidence could we adduce? We can't take a picture of the human mind.

Professor **Eron**. In my opinion, and in the opinion of NIMH, the Surgeon General and other people, there is enough evidence. The television networks don't agree, and that's their privilege. But I certainly think any reasonable individual looking at the evidence will say, indeed, there is something here.

Mr. **Hughes**. Dr. Pearl, I am particularly interested in some of the subtle influences of the media, such as viewer habituation, sensitization, and the occurrence of violence. Do you believe, for instance, that a sequential showing of the destructive and painful consequences of aggression would limit that particular effect?

Dr. **Pearl**. I think it probably would help in that direction. I certainly don't know whether, by itself, that that would have that kind of an effect completely, but it would certainly help in that direction on the basis of at least some little evidence that has been generated in the past years. I think in too many programs we have a sanitized level of violence, particularly it seems to me in many children's programs, cartooning, for example, in which someone gets practically destroyed, run over by a steam roller or what have you, and bounced back.

I know it is fashionable among some to say that cartoons and such are obviously fantasy and would not have this kind of an impact and should not be considered along with the other kinds of programming. But I think there are enough studies which indicate, indeed, that children who watch heavy diets of cartoons that have a good deal of violence are the more aggressive children in comparison to their peers who watch less of that.

Mr. HUGHES. Professor Cook reaches the conclusion that it is the cumulative impact that is really significant. In fact, if I understand your testimony correctly, one of the criticisms directed at Dr. Milavsky's conclusions is that the cumulative impact is not taken into account.

Do all the panelists agree that cumulative impact of violence on TV over a period of years, increasing as the individual gets older and comprehends more, as they interract with others, are able to use those traits that he or she might pick up from TV and becomes more important and significant?

Dr. PEARL. I would certainly say it has a cumulative impact in at least two areas, the one that we are speaking about, perhaps increased aggressiveness, but as I alluded to, there is a cumulative impact also in changing attitudes in terms—particularly for children, but I think for others, too—in terms of a growing acceptance that a higher level of violence may be normal in one's world and on that basis perhaps a greater readiness to accept that kind of behavior as being normal and not to become indignant with respect to those kinds of behaviors, or attempt to do anything about that.

I think that is an effect, also, that is less talked about but which I think is really not less important, at least for a society's long range goals and benefits.

Mr. HUGHES. TV has obviously a very profound impact upon individuals, and often it is very difficult to distinguish between fact and fiction in some programming. How much of the simulation from TV of what the real world is like is in evidence in your studies? How much, for instance, does the unreal world—that is, the high incidence of TV violence—become a part of the psychic of the individual? Have the studies indicated anything?

Dr. PEARL. I think there are plenty of studies which indicate that young children particularly, but not restricted to young children, even when a program on the basis of those adults that have developed supposedly as fictional, that that is accepted as being real and a part of many of these viewers. There is enough evidence to indicate that when programs or violence on programs is seen as being real, that that has a greater impact when there is a clear recognition on the part of the viewers that it is fictional.

It seems to me that this is a characteristic that programmers are going to have to take into account later, not just what they intend but what the actual consequences turn out to be. I think there is a great deal that research can show, that much of the research can be helpful, I think, to the broadcast industry and others developing programs, if they would only use it instead of feeling that research is adversary and is really out, in a sense, to pin them in a corner and to blame them. I don't think there are many responsible individuals who will say that any of this is the result of a deliberate attempt to create certain kinds of effects. I don't think so. I think many of these are untoward effects, but they are real effects.

Mr. HUGHES. Dr. Lichter, in your report you state "Of course, a policeman's life may not be dull, but neither is it always entertaining to others." One could hardly expect many television plots to revolve around cases of vandalism and littering, and while drunkenness may be a major health problem, how many ways can you film "The Days of Wine and Roses"? Nine hours of nightly prime time quickly consumes an awesome amount of stories and dialog and it is easier to maintain audience interest with dastardly deeds than with relatively hum-drum stuff of everyday police work. Over the long run, "Dragnet's" Joe Friday just can't compete with "James Bond."

People from the media say that such a statement is an absolute response to much of your criticism. Would you want to comment on that?

Dr. LICHTER. Yes. First I would like to say that I do think there are commercial pressures that are brought to bear on the types of programs that are chosen to remain on the air. I would not deny that. But I would like to make some additional statements.

First, there is at least one study I know that was a very innovative little study, that took an episode of "Police Woman," which was a very violent show, and they showed it two different ways: First with all of the violence in it, and then they chopped out the violence. But that's all they did. They basically left the plot line intact. They found that when they gave this little test to people, the people who saw the violent episode didn't like it any better or any worse than the people who saw the episode without the violence.

So what I am trying to say is I think perhaps it may take a little more creativity on the part of the people who put these programs together. But I think they can make programs without so much violence that will be appealing.

Furthermore, I have some surveys in front of me that show that about three-quarters of the American public think there is too much violence on television, that television violence is dangerous and that it is not particularly enjoyable. So, perhaps the public is ready for something different.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you.

The gentleman from Connecticut.

Mr. MORRISON. I have no questions.

Mr. HUGHES. Well, thank you. I want to thank the panel very much for their contributions. Your testimony has been very helpful, quite insightful, and we are indebted to you.

Mr. HUGHES. Our next panel, the final panel of today, consists of J. Ronald Milavsky, vice president, news and social research, NBC; Alan Wurtzel, director of news, developmental and social research of ABC; and Philip A. Harding, director, projects research, CBS/Broadcast Group.

Gentlemen, if you will come forward at this point, we have your statements which, without objection, will be made a part of the record. You may proceed as you see fit. We would like it if you could possibly summarize for us.

I am going to turn the chair over at this time to the gentleman from Connecticut. I have to go over to the Capitol for just a few minutes, but I will be back shortly.

Mr. MORRISON [presiding]. Have you chosen an order in which you would like to proceed?

Mr. HARDING. I think we can do it as indicated on the agenda.

Mr. MORRISON. If you would proceed, then. Thank you.

STATEMENTS OF J. RONALD MILAVSKY, VICE PRESIDENT, NEWS AND SOCIAL RESEARCH, NATIONAL BROADCASTING CO., INC.; ALAN H. WURTZEL, DIRECTOR OF NEWS, DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH, AMERICAN BROADCASTING CO., INC.; AND PHILIP A. HARDING, DIRECTOR, SPECIAL PROJECTS RESEARCH, CBS/BROADCAST GROUP

Dr. MILAVSKY. My name is Ron Milavsky. I am vice president, news and social research, of the National Broadcasting Co. I head the NBC department responsible for learning all we can about the social effects of television. I hold a Ph.D. in sociology from Columbia University and have published a major study in this discipline.

For the past 14 years, I have directed NBC's study of the possible social consequences of depictions of violence on television. The department began that study in 1969. That was the same year the Surgeon General of the United States was directed to conduct an investigation of that issue.

Until that time, the research aimed at determining whether violence on television causes aggressive behavior was based on three approaches: laboratory experiments, field experiments, and surveys. Each of these encounters serious limitations when applied to the issue of television and aggression in real life.

Recognizing these limitations, the Surgeon General's report of 1972 suggested that a longitudinal panel survey might be more appropriate to get at the issue of causality in real life. An increasing number of social scientists agree. Our book, "Television and Aggression: A Panel Study"—which I have brought with me and I think you have a copy of—represents the first major study to be published using this approach coupled with state-of-the-art analytic methods.

The key element of the panel survey is repeated measurements of the television viewing and aggression of the same individuals at several points in time. This enables the researcher to examine television's possible causal role by studying changes in aggression as related to prior television viewing under real-life conditions. This design is the best available to address the central question of concern to the public: Does television violence cause young viewers to behave aggressively over the long term?

Our project studied 3,200 children and teens of diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds in two midwestern cities over a 3-year period. Procedures for the selection of this sample were designed to maximize opportunities for the detection of any impact of a steady diet of television violence on the long-term development of aggressive behavior patterns. Because of this focus, short-term arousal or imitative effects of the sort studied in the experimental literature are not addressed. Our study looked for persistent change in behavior as a result of television viewing.

Concerning young boys, the data show clearly that the great majority are not antisocially aggressive. The problem with aggression lies with the few who exhibit a great deal of it. Our analytic investigations focused on searching for evidence that television was causally implicated in this aggression.

We conducted a considerable number of causal analyses to maximize our changes of producting valid findings and of detecting an effect of television exposure, if it existed. All these analyses, individually and as a whole, found no evidence that television exposure has a consistent or statistically significant effect on the boys.

Our analyses accounted for such possibilities as measurement error, which occurs in all studies of this type; for the possibility that the causal relationship might exist among children with specific amounts of exposure, perhaps only those who viewed the most television; and the possibility that only children who were predisposed toward aggression by virtue of their particular personalities or social backgrounds would be affected. None of these or other deeper investigations found evidence that a television effect was there for elementary schoolboys.

We also made a study of elementary schoolgirls. The data showed that girls are considerably less aggressive than boys.

As was true for boys, the basic causal analysis did not show statistically significant indications of a causal influence of television on girls. In fact, the relationships in these analyses are quite similar to those obtained for boys.

Further, the same sets of additional analyses applied to boys were also applied to girls. They confirmed that the lack of consistent statistically significant association which was found among boys is replicated among the elementary schoolgirls.

In our study of teenage boys, we found that, like younger boys, most teens are not aggressive. However, we found that there is more differentiation of aggression among teens than among elementary schoolchildren. Factor analysis revealed four separate dimensions: there is personal aggression, aggression against property, aggression against teachers, and there is delinquency, a measure of very serious aggression.

The analysis approach for exploring the existence of a causal connection between television exposure and the three milder forms of aggression was similar to that used for the younger respondents. Again, we found no significant causal association between television exposure and personal, property, or teacher aggression. The conclusion was corroborated in further analyses which aimed at detecting causal effects by taking into account each of the large number of factors which might have hidden the existence of such effects.

Of our four measures of aggression, "delinquency" is of greatest social concern, although it is a rare occurrence even among teenage boys. Because the acts included in the measure of delinquency are extremely rare, a special approach designed for the analysis of rare events was necessary.

These analyses showed that the relationship between television exposure and serious acts of aggression is clearly within the bounds of chance and provides no evidence of a consistent significant association. Nor did supplementary analyses of the same type as those done for elementary schoolchildren produce any evidence of television effects.

The focus of our study was on the detection of effects of television. However, since we collected a great deal of information about the family and social conditions in which the children and teens lived, we were able to do limited explorations of the role of such factors in causing aggression. We found that living in low socioeconomic circumstances, and in neighborhoods and in families where aggression is commonplace, and for teenagers having friends who use drugs, are factors which do lead to increases in aggressive behavior over time. Such factors clearly deserve attention in future research efforts aimed at understanding the causes of aggressive behavior.

Despite our belief that there is no evidence that depictions of violence on television have long-range effects on day-to-day behavior, NBC is keenly aware that it is a medium which is received directly in the home. We believe it is prudent to be concerned about the depiction of crime and violence on television. We have a Broadcast Standards Department which reviews all our entertainment programs to eliminate violence inserted for shock value and not necessary to character or plot. Also eliminated are detailed portrayals of any techniques which might be expected to facilitate a violent act or the commission of a crime.

For some years we have also enlisted the aid of a number of prominent social scientists to review NBC's children's programs. Among other things, these social scientists review our children's programs for anything which might harm viewers, and consult with our broadcast standards department so that their judgments about what is allowable can be consistent with social science principles.

Now, the issue of television's relationship to real-world behavior is a complex one. With our study, we hope and believe that we have substantially contributed to illuminating it.

I would like to comment on a few things that were said by the previous panel as they pertain to our study, because I think a few things were said that were in error and I would like to clear that up for the record.

The first thing is that both Professor Cook and Professor Eron stated that the only control that seemed to work in the sense of reducing the relationships was the control for socioeconomic status. That is not true. A number of other controls also reduced the relationships considerably, including family religiosity. If you want to look on page 189 and 190 of the book, you will see where that is reported.

The other thing you will see if you look at that table on page 190, I believe, is that it is not correct that the school SES measure worked and that family SES did not. In fact, it is the reverse. School SES did not work and it is a measure of the family SES that did work. So Professor Eron is just wrong on that and I would hope he would look at the book and clear that up in his mind.

The other point I want to address is it was said our data showed increasing effects over time. The coefficients get a little larger in the longer lags only for the boys. We report that in the book.

It is hard to know what to make of that for a number of reasons. First of all, we are dealing here with very, very small coefficients. They get larger but they never approach statistical significance. So they are really beyond the ability of scientists to make judgments about. That pattern does not occur among the four measures in the teens or among the girls.

Now, Professor Cook and I disagree on that point. He thinks he does see certain patterns there. We think he is looking at the data a little selectively on those points and he is not looking at all the data. Other people have looked at the data because it is a very important point in our study. There are people who also do not see patterns in those data. As a matter of fact, at the National Academy of Sciences meeting, Professor Sechrest discussed our findings after Professor Cook did and he didn't see the patterns that Professor Cook sees. We are talking about something that is so small here that it is almost in the eye of the beholder. I think it is beyond scientific judgment, and I think you have to judge these things by criteria other than scientific principles.

Another point I want to clear up is this assertion by Professor Eron that television accounts for 10 percent of the aggression in real life. That is a great exaggeration. None of the data in this whole body of research show any numbers that could add up to that kind of an effect. It is at most a fraction of that. Finally, it was reported by Professor Eron that we found statistically significant coefficients. That's exactly what we did not find. What we did find is that the coefficients tended to be just on the positive side of zero. But they weren't statistically significant.

With that, I thank you.

Mr. MORRISON. Thank you.

Mr. Wurtzel.

Dr. WURTZEL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Alan Wurtzel. I am the director of news, developmental and social research, for the American Broadcasting Cos. My responsibilities include the supervision of the social research unit which encompasses the following activities: first, the continual assessment of prevailing attitudes, values, and behaviors of the society at large and how they may relate to television; second, reviewing the scholarly literature on the social effects of television; and third, the participation in the research activities of the academic social science community.

The staff of this unit which I supervise consists of three individuals: one with a Ph.D. in mass communications, another with a master's degree in mass communications, and a third with a master's degree in research design and methodology. My own background consists of a Ph.D. in mass communications and 8 years experience as a teacher and researcher on the mass media.

In my statement I would like to do two things. First, to outline ABC's position on the National Institute of Mental Health's report entitled "Television and Behavior" as it pertains to the various conclusions regarding television violence, and secondly, to briefly describe some of the policies and procedures which are employed by ABC to ensure that when violence is depicted in programming, it is handled with appropriate care and responsibility.

I should mention that I will summarize my remarks from a booklet which ABC prepared and distributed earlier this year, entitled "A Research Perspective on Television and Violence." As it contains a far more comprehensive analysis of the issues relevant to today's hearing, I would like to submit the entire booklet for the record.

Mr. **Morrison**. Without objection, it will be made a part of the record.

Dr. **Wurtzel**. Thank you.

Our review of the NIMH report indicates that many of the studies cited in support of its conclusions are seriously flawed and that the report is marred by inconsistencies and omissions. Despite the impression created by the NIMH report that it contains new research, in fact it is simply a review of the scientific literature which has been publicly available over the past 10 years. There are no startling revelations and no studies which definitively prove a cause and effect relationship between viewing television violence and subsequent violent behavior. In fact, the only really new study in this area is the one that has been discussed today, the study by Milavsky and his colleagues from NBC, which demonstrates that this NIMH conclusion of a causal relationship is simply incorrect.

Now, in the brief time allotted, let me outline our response to some of the most important issues that are involved, issues which have been so frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted regarding the research in this field. There are four issues:

First is the nature of the scientific community; second is how violence is defined; the third is how violence is measured; and finally, the question of cause and effect.

The first issue, the nature of the scientific community, is important because we place a great deal of faith and crediblity in science. For most of us, if a scientist says something is true, we have no reason, and even less ability, to question that conclusion.

The NIMH says there is a consensus among academic researchers that television causes violence. However, in April of 1982, over 400 researchers studying television and its social effects were asked in a survey by Bybee, Robinson and Turow whether they believed violence on television was "the cause" of aggressive behavior. Only 1 percent agreed with the statement. This is hardly a consensus.

Despite the fact that the NIMH acknowledges that no single study conclusively links television with aggression, the report uses the idea of "convergence," which means that the NIMH researchers looked at a number of studies which all tended to point in the same general direction to support their claim. The problem in using convergence theory is that we fail to question widely held beliefs, and we risk perpetuating a number of incorrect assumptions which are all based on a faulty basic premise.

It is also significant in this context that virtually every research study cited in the NIMH report either did not observe real violence among the subjects tested, or depended upon statistical associations that were extremely small. Nonetheless, the research staff of the NIMH and the individual researchers insist on using these data to make sweeping conclusions regarding the impact of television on aggressive behavior.

Now, in many social sciences statistical results of the magnitude reported in the studies cited by the NIMH report would lead to a conclusion of "no significant relationship." Yet in the NIMH studies the same small correlations are interpreted as signifying very important behavioral and attitudinal relationships. The point is that social science depends heavily on the interpretation of data in order to reach conclusions and to determine implications. The admission that the behavior observed does not constitute real violence, coupled with the fact that the statistical correlations are extremely low, suggests that conclusions and inferences are being drawn which go far beyond what the empirical data warrant. In short, in ABC's view, the research is being interpreted and used in a way which is simply not consistent with a rigorous and objective scientific method.

The second issue involves the definition of violence on television. A frequent criticism is that the amount of violence on television remains high. The only way to determine how much violence exists is to employ a content analysis which is simply the actual counting of every violent action within a sample of television programs. The crucial point is, however, that the way in which we define what we will count as violence will in large part determine what we actually find. Let me say that again. The way we define violence and the counting will determine what we actually find.

For example, a number of researchers employ a greatly expanded definition of violence. For example, they include accidents; slapstick; acts of nature, like a hurricane or tornado; fantasies, such as a witch casing a spell; and some even utilize coder discretion, which enables every individual coder to personally and arbitrarily assign more weight to violent acts which in their own opinion are objectionable.

The point is that using these kinds of definitions, the picture that we get of the amount of violence on prime time television is terribly distorted. For example, in Dr. George Gerbner's violence counts, which play a prominent part in the NIMH report, fully one-third of all violence attributed to network programming is not even caused by human beings.

The third issue is how scientists measure violence. This is one of the least understood aspects of the research. When the public hears that scientists find a link between television and violent behavior, they naturally think the violence which the scientist refers to are the murders, muggings, rapes, and random property destruction which we hear about in the news every day. In fact, the research does not measure these things at all. It would obviously be impossible for any researcher to systematically observe this kind of behavior, so they have to use proxies for the actual violence.

Among the most commonly used substitutes for measuring violence are, administering a questionnaire to subjects in order to measure their attitudes toward violence; observing children's behavior at play in a schoolyard, so that making faces, imitating superheroes, a push or a shove or yelling, have all been utilized as measures of real violence; or requesting subjects in a laboratory situation to take part in some sort of violent activity.

It should be noted that this request is often made by the research authority and frequently the subject is assured that participation will not actually harm another person. The researchers themselves, in many of the articles that are included in the NIMH report, acknowledge that they are not actually measuring "violence" as the term is commonly understood.

The fourth issue, cause and effect, is obviously at the heart of the question. Clearly, the crucial question is: Does television violence cause viewers to engage in aggressive behavior?

Now, the NIMH reaches its conclusions by relying on studies that use a statistical technique called correlation. Correlation, as any statistician will tell you, can never be used to say anything about cause and effect. It simply says that two things are correlated or interrelated with one another. For example, there is a very high correlation between the sale of bathing suits and the consumption of ice cream, but we cannot conclude that bathing suit sales cause people to buy more ice cream, or that people who eat ice cream will buy more bathing suits. In fact, it is usually a third variable—the hot weather during summer—that accounts for both.

In the same way, a correlation cannot tell whether violent programs cause children to behave aggressively or whether aggressive children are more likely to seek out violent programs. What is usually more often the case is that a third variable, such as the child's IQ, education, level of poverty or parental approach to discipline, are often found to be the real cause of the behavior. When studies have attempted to take into account these third variables, the relationship between television and violent behavior is reduced to zero.

The only way scientists can truly infer causality is through the use of laboratory studies. But these involve unnatural testing environments and the use of material which is often totally unlike anything which would normally appear on television. For example, studies have often used clips from unedited theatrical films showing scenes whch are taken entirely out of context. After viewing these clips, the subject is frustrated or angered by the experimenter. Then the subject is asked to participate in a series of activities which are designed to measure aggressive behavior.

One of the most common methods is to ask the subject to administer electric shocks to someone ostensibly in the next room. Now, understandably, subjects are often reticent to engage in this kind of activity, but the experimenter usually assures them that, first of all, not only will the administration of shocks not hurt the other person, but they will actually help him or her to learn a difficult task.

Well, after being reassured by the scientific authority figure that the actions they are about to engage in are socially sanctioned and, in fact, are not harmful, the subject does what he is told. This behavior is measured and then reported as violent activity.

The question is, How can we generalize from such a socially sanctioned activity to actual violent behavior in the real world? The answer, of course, is that we cannot, at least not without indicating a number of important caveats which place the conclusions into a more accurate perspective.

Now let me briefly discuss at this point some of the internal policies and procedures which ABC utilizes to enable us to depict violence within an entertainment program with care and responsibility. Special policies applicable to televised violence have been periodically revised and refined over the years. Influencing these decisions are independent social research, our day-to-day experience, and consultations wth independent consultants.

All entertainment series and specials are produced under the scrutiny of the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department. Every program script is carefully reviewed by Broadcast Standards editors and every violent action within a script is carefully evaluated. The portrayal of violence must be reasonably related to plot development or to character delineation. Gratuitous or excessive violence is to be avoided and the unique or detailed depictions of violent actions which might be copied or emulated are required to be modified or eliminated.

One of the tools which the Broadcast Standards editors use in evaluating program content is the incident classification and analysis form system, or the ICAF system. The ICAF system was developed by the Broadcast Standards Department in conjunction with social scientists from the social research unit at ABC. It enables every editor to systematically categorize, quantify, and weigh every violent incident within a program and provides editors with a qualitative and quantitative measure of a given program's violent content.

The ICAF system is continuously monitored and reviewed by the ABC social research unit. This procedure maintains its high levels of reliability and validity and ensures that the ICAF system remains a sensitive and accurate instrument for the identification and categorization of violent program content. Used in conjunction with the editor's professional judgment, the ICAF system is a highly effective tool for maintaining ABC's standards of acceptability and appropriateness.

In conclusion, the issue of television and violence is a complex question for which there are no simple answers. Our analysis of the research relied upon by NIMH to reach its conclusions demonstrates that there is no reliable substantiation for the ultimate NIMH position. In fact, we believe that there are still more unanswered questions than there are definitively settled issues.

Research is clearly a valuable means by which we can understand more about the medium of television and its social impact. But research is only useful after we have assessed and evaluated each study's strengths and weaknesses and placed it into its proper perspective. The NIMH conclusions are supposedly based entirely upon scientific evidence and, therefore, must withstand the rigor of scientific analysis and review. Our careful examination of the research indicates that the conclusions which the NIMH reached are unsubstantiated and unwarranted when they are subjected to scientific analysis.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to share our evaluation of the research with you today.

[Mr. Wurtzel's statement follows:]

SUMMARY OF STATEMENT OF DR. ALAN H. WURTZEL

In ABC's view the NIMH study is seriously flawed: (1) it is essentially based upon research material which is not new, but which is being interpreted and used in a manner inconsistent with objective scientific method; (2) the definitions of "violence", critical to the study, produce distortions; (3) the methods utilized to measure actual violence are unrealistic; and (4) in attempting to deal with the ultimate question of cause and effect, the study fails to take into account numerous variables relevant to human behavior and thus produces conclusions based, not upon scientific method, but unfounded speculation.

ABC's review of the report indicates there are no startling revelations and no studies which definitively prove a cause and effect between viewing television violence and subsequent behavior. Nonetheless, as a matter of policy and practice, ABC has for many years evaluted all entertainment and special programming through its Broadcast Standards and Practices Department. Under ABC's procedures, gratutitous or excessive violence is avoided and detailed depiction of violent actions which might be emulated are modified or eliminated.

The issue of television and violence raises complex questions for which there are no simple answers. Research, in which ABC has been and will continue to be an active participant, is valuable. The NIMH study, however, supposedly based upon scientific evidence and method, cannot itself withstand the rigor of scientific analysis and review.

STATEMENT OF

ALAN H. WURTZEL

DIRECTOR OF NEWS,
DEVELOPMENTAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH FOR
AMERICAN BROADCASTING COMPANIES, INC.

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME
OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

April 13, 1983

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is Alan Wurtzel. I am the Director of News, Developmental and Social Research for American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. My responsibilities include the supervision of the Social Research Unit which encompasses the following activities: (1) the continual assessment of prevailing attitudes, values, and behaviors of the society at large and how they may relate to television; (2) reviewing the scholarly literature on the social effects of television; and (3) participation in the research activities of the academic social science community.

The staff of the Social Research Unit, which I supervise, consists of three individuals: one with a Ph.D in Mass Communications, another with a masters degree in Mass Communications, a third with a masters degree in Research Design and Methodology. My own background consists of a Ph.D in Mass Communications from New York University and eight years experience as a teacher and researcher on the mass media at both the University of Georgia and the City University of New York.

In my presentation today I would like, first, to outline ABC's position on the National Institute of Mental Health's report entitled Television and Behavior as its pertains to the various conclusions regarding television violence and its impact on behavior and attitudes; and, second, briefly to describe some of the procedures and policies which are employed by ABC to ensure that when violence is depicted in programming, it is handled with appropriate care and responsibility. My remarks are summarized from a booklet which ABC prepared and distributed earlier this year entitled A Research Perspective on Television and Violence. As it contains a far more comprehensive analysis of the issues relevant to today's hearing, I would like to submit the entire booklet for the record.

Our review of the NIMH report indicates that many of the studies cited in support of its conclusions are seriously flawed and that the report is marred by inconsistencies and omissions. Despite the impression created by the NIMH report that it contains new research, in fact, it is simply a review of the scientific literature which has been publicly available over the past ten years. There are no startling revelations and no studies which definitively prove a cause and effect relationship between viewing television violence and subsequent violent behavior. In fact, the only new study in the entire report is by NBC's Department of Social Research and it actually demonstrates that the NIMH conclusion of a causal relationship is simply incorrect.

In the brief time alotted to me this morning, let me outline ABC's response to some of the most important issues involved -- issues which have been so frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted. These issues are: (1) the nature of the scientific community, (2) defining violence, (3) measuring violence, and (4) the question of cause and effect.

The first issue, the nature of the scientific community, is important because we place a great deal of faith and credibility in science. For most of us, if a scientist says something is true, we have no reason -- and less ability -- to question that conclusion.

The NIMH says there is a consensus among academic researchers that television causes violence. However, in April 1982, more than 400 researchers actively studying television and its social effects were asked in a survey by Bybee, Robinson and Turow whether they believed violence on television was "the cause" of aggressive behavior. Only one percent agreed with the statement. This is hardly a consensus.

Despite the fact that the NIMH acknowledges that no single study conclusively links television with aggression, the report uses the idea of "convergence" -- which means that the NIMH researchers looked at a number of studies which all tended to point in the same general direction to support their claim. The problem in using a convergence theory, however, is that we fail to question widely held beliefs, and we risk perpetuating a number of incorrect assumptions which are all based on a faulty basic premise.

It is also significant in this context that virtually every research study cited in the NIMH report either did not observe real violence among the subjects tested, or depended upon statistical associations that were extremely small. Nevertheless, the research staff of the NIMH and the individual researchers insist on using these data to make sweeping conclusions regarding the impact of television on aggressive behavior.

In many social sciences, statistical results of the magnitude reported in the studies cited in the NIMH report would lead to a conclusion of "no significant relationship". Yet in the NIMH studies the same small correlations are interpreted as signifying very important behavioral and attitudinal relationships. The point is that social science depends heavily on the interpretation of the data in order to reach conclusions and to determine implications. The admission that the behavior observed does not constitute real violence, coupled with the fact that the statistical correlations are extremely low, suggests that conclusions and inferences are being drawn which go far beyond what the empirical data warrant. In short, in ABC's view, the research is being interpreted and used in a way which is not consistent with a rigorous and objective scientific method.

The second issue involves the definition of violence on television. A frequent criticism is that the amount of violence on television remains high. The only way to determine how much violence exists is to employ a content analysis which is simply the actual counting of every violent action within a sample of television programs. The crucial point is, however, that the way in which we define what we will count as violence will in large part determine what we actually find.

A number of researchers employ a greatly expanded definition of violence. For example, they include accidents (someone trips and falls); slapstick (a pie in the face); acts of nature (hurricane or tornado); fantasy (a witch casting a spell); and even coder discretion which enables each individual coder to personally and arbitrarily assign more weight to violent acts which in their opinion are objectionable.

The point is that using these kinds of definitions, the picture we get of the amount of violence on prime time television is terribly distorted. For example, in Dr. George Gerbner's violence counts, fully one-third of all violence attributed to network programming is not even caused by human beings.

The third issue is how scientists measure violence. This is one of the least understood aspects of the research. When the public hears that scientists find a link between television and violent behavior, they naturally think the violence which the scientist refers to are the murders, muggings, rapes, and random property destruction which we hear about in the news every day. In fact, the research does not measure these things at all. It would obviously be impossible for any researcher to systematically observe this kind of behavior so they must use proxies for the actual violence.

Among the most commonly used substitutes for measuring violence are (1) administering a written questionnaire to subjects in order to measure their attitudes, (2) observing children's play behavior in a schoolyard (making faces, imitating superheroes, an occasional push or shove, or yelling have all been utilized as measures of violence), and (3) requesting subjects in a laboratory situation to take part in some sort of violent activity. It should be noted that this request is made by the research authority and frequently the subject is assured that participation will not actually harm another person. Often the researchers themselves acknowledge that they are not actually measuring "violence" as the term is commonly understood.

The fourth issue -- cause and effect -- is obviously at the heart of the controversy. Clearly the crucial question is: Does television violence cause viewers to engage in aggressive behavior?

The NIMH reaches its conclusions by relying on studies which have used a statistical technique called correlation. Correlation, as any statistician will indicate, can never be used to tell anything about cause and effect. It simply tells that two things are co-related or interrelated with one another. For example, there is a very high correlation between the sale of bathing suits and the consumption of ice cream, but we can not conclude that bathing suits cause people to buy more ice cream or that people who eat ice cream will buy more bathing suits.

In fact, it is a third variable -- the hot weather during summer -- which actually accounts for both. In the same way, a correlation can not tell whether violent programs cause children to behave aggressively or whether aggressive children are more likely to seek out violent programs. What is usually more often the case, is that a third variable such as the child's IQ, education, level of poverty, or parental approach to discipline are commonly found to be the real cause of the behavior. When studies have attempted to take into account these third variables, the relationship between television and violent behavior is reduced to zero.

The only way scientists can truly infer causality is through the use of laboratory studies. But these involve unnatural testing environments and the use of video material which is often totally unlike anything which would normally appear on television. For example, studies have often used clips from unedited theatrical films showing scenes entirely out of context. After viewing these clips, the subject is frustrated or angered by the experimenter in some fashion and then is asked to participate in a series of activities which are designed to measure aggressive behavior. One of the most common methods is to ask the subject to administer electric shocks to someone ostensibly in the other room. Often subjects are reticent to engage in this activity but the experimenter usually assures them that not only will the shocks not "hurt" the other person, they will "help" him or her to learn a difficult task. Thus, after being reassured by the scientific authority figure that the actions they are about to engage in are socially sanctioned and, in fact, not harmful, the subject does what he is told. This behavior is then measured and reported as violent activity.

The question is how can we generalize from such a socially sanctioned activity to actual violent behavior in the real world? The answer, of course, is that we can not, at least not without indicating a number of important caveats which place the conclusions into a more accurate perspective.

I would now like to discuss briefly some of the internal policies and procedures which ABC utilizes to enable us to depict violence within an entertainment program with care and responsibility. Special policies applicable to televised violence have been periodically revised and refined -- over the years. Influencing these decisions are independent social research, our day to day experience and consultations with independent consultants.

All entertainment series and specials are produced under the scrutiny of the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department. Every program script is carefully reviewed by Broadcast Standards editors and every violent action within the script is carefully evaluated. The portrayal of violence must be reasonably related to plot development or to character delineation. Gratuitous or excessive violence is to be avoided and the unique or detailed depictions of violent actions which might be copied or emulated are required to be modified or eliminated.

One of the tools the Broadcast Standards and Practices editors use in evaluating program content is the Incident Classification and Analysis Form (ICAF) system. The ICAF system was developed by the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department in conjunction with social scientists from the ABC Social Research Unit. It enables every editor to systematically categorize, quantify, and weigh every violent incident within a program and provides editors with a qualitative and quantitative measure of a given program's violence content.

The ICAF system is especially useful because it not only counts incidents of violence but differentiates the severity of the violence and considers the overall context within which the violence is portrayed. The ICAF system enables the Broadcast Standards and Practices editor to identify those elements within a program which may be excessive and gratuitous and is an important aspect of the overall evaluation of program content.

The ICAF system is continuously monitored and reviewed by the ABC Social Research Unit. This procedure maintains its high levels of reliability and validity and ensures that the ICAF system remains a sensitive and accurate instrument for the identification and categorization of violent program content. Used in conjunction with the editor's professional judgment, the ICAF system is a highly effective tool for maintaining ABC's standards of acceptability and appropriateness.

In conclusion, the issue of television and violence is a complex question for which there are no simple answers. Our analysis of the research relied upon by NIMH to reach its conclusions demonstrates that there is no reliable substantiation for the ultimate NIMH position. In fact, we believe that there are still more unanswered questions than there are definitively settled issues.

Research is clearly a valuable means by which we can understand more about the medium of television and its social impact. But research is only useful after we have assessed and evaluated each study's strengths and weaknesses and placed it into its proper perspective. The NIMH conclusions are supposedly based entirely upon scientific evidence and, therefore, must withstand the rigor of scientific analysis and review. Our careful examination of the research indicates that the conclusions which the NIMH reached are unsubstantiated and unwarranted when they are subjected to scientific analysis.

Thank you for affording me the opportunity to share our evaluation of the research with you today.

A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE ON TELEVISION AND VIOLENCE

abc

INTRODUCTION

The subject of television violence and its impact on viewers is a complex question for which there are no simple answers. After more than thirty years of scientific investigation, the issue of television violence remains open to debate. Although the body of literature on television and violence continues to expand, results have been largely inconclusive, and there are still few definitive answers.

Recently, the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) released a report entitled *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties.* Among many of its findings was the conclusion that a causal relationship exists between television violence and aggressive behavior. However, a careful examination of the research which was used to support the NIMH position indicates that the evidence does not warrant such a conclusion. ABC feels, therefore, a responsibility to place the NIMH report — and other research regarding television's effects — into perspective.

***A Research Perspective On Television and Violence* was written to provide broader insight and understanding of the primary issues involving research on television and violence. The information is presented in a straightforward manner so that we can reach beyond the scientific and academic community and communicate with the general public. Included is a summary of ABC Broadcast Standards and Practices policies and procedures which are the guidelines employed by the network to ensure that when violence is depicted in entertainment programming it is handled responsibly. An appendix containing research information, a summary of the major NIMH studies, and a list of references and sources is included for further study.**

SCIENCE VS. VALUES

The issue of television violence can be addressed on two different levels: as an objective *scientific* question and as a subjective *values* issue. In dealing with subjective values, divergent opinions and viewpoints are unavoidable because conclusions are based upon reasoning which is both rational and emotional. Despite the ability to develop strong positions on either side of an issue, there is no definitive way to prove that any one position is absolutely and unequivocally correct.

By contrast, scientific study requires rigor, objectivity, and the adherence to a predetermined set of rules and procedures. Conclusions must be based solely on empirical evidence and must be judged by analyzing the assumptions which underly the study and the methods which are employed in the research.

The NIMH conclusions are based entirely upon scientific evidence. Therefore, they must withstand the rigor of scientific analysis and review. Our careful examination of the research indicates that the conclusions which the NIMH reaches are unsubstantiated when subjected to scientific analysis.

THE NIMH REPORT

In May of 1982, the National Institute of Mental Health released the first of a two-volume report entitled *Television and Behavior*. The first volume is essentially a summary report detailing the Advisory Panel's conclusions on a broad range of research topics relating to television and its effects. The publication of this research summary stimulated controversy and debate despite the fact that Volume II, which contains all relevant technical information and background reports, was not released until the following October.

During the five month interim between the publication of Volumes I and II, the national press reported and reviewed the findings of the NIMH panel—focusing in particular upon the conclusions which addressed the issue of television and violence. Without the benefit of any supporting research material it was impossible to evaluate the NIMH position on this subject. With the release of the technical volume, however, it is now possible to assess their conclusions.

BACKGROUND OF THE REPORT

The 1982 NIMH report *Television and Behavior* is a follow-up to the 1972 *Surgeon General's Report on Television and Violence*, a study which was initiated after a series of Congressional hearings on the impact of television violence on behavior. This government inquiry resulted in one of the most ambitious social science undertakings in recent history. Over $1 million was allocated to sponsor original research directly addressing the relationship between viewing television violence and subsequent behavioral violence. The result of this elaborate investigation, documented in the Surgeon General's report, was inconclusive with no direct causal relationship established between television and violent behavior.

Ten years after the publication of the Surgeon General's report a follow-up review was initiated. This update was conducted under the auspices of the NIMH by establishing a seven-member Advisory Board; of the seven participants, four had contributed to the Surgeon General's original study. The NIMH Advisory Board commissioned researchers to review and evaluate all of the research to-date concerning television and behavior. Included in the review was some of the same research which had been sponsored by the Surgeon General in 1972. Despite the impression that the 1982 NIMH report contains new research, in fact, only one new violence study is actually reported.

The NIMH report, *Television and Behavior*, is essentially a review of existing research which has already appeared in the literature and which has been previously assessed and evaluated. Thus, the NIMH is *not* a new addition to social science literature; it is simply a reiteration of information which has already been made available.

Nevertheless, the NIMH Advisory Panel arrived at four major conclusions concerning the relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior and social attitudes.

ABC RESPONDS TO THE NIMH CONCLUSIONS ON TV AND VIOLENCE

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 1
The research findings support the conclusion of a causal relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior.

ABC RESPONSE:
The research does not support the conclusion of a causal relationship.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 2
There is a clear consensus among most researchers that television violence leads to aggressive behavior.

ABC RESPONSE:
There exists a significant debate within the research community over the relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 3
Despite slight variations over the past decade, the amount of violence on television has remained at consistently high levels.

ABC RESPONSE:
There has been a decrease in the overall amount of violence in recent years.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 4
Television has been shown to cultivate television-influenced attitudes among viewers. Heavy viewers are more likely to be more fearful and less trusting of other people than are light viewers as a result of their exposure to television.

ABC RESPONSE:
The research does not support the conclusion that television significantly cultivates viewer attitudes and perceptions of social reality.

Following are detailed analyses and evaluations of each of the four NIMH conclusions.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 1

The research findings support the conclusion of a causal relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior.

ABC RESPONSE:

The research does not support the conclusion of a causal relationship.

In the technical report chapter on Television and Violence, the author cites and evaluates 14 studies which lead him to the conclusion that "overwhelming evidence" exists to establish a positive relationship between viewing television violence and subsequent violent behavior. Despite the NIMH Panel's assertion that some 2500 studies were conducted on the subject of television and behavior, only 14 are used to substantiate the claim of direct cause and effect.

Before we analyze these studies in detail, we must discuss three key aspects regarding all television violence research:

1. The definition and measurement of violence and aggression.

2. The use of correlation to imply causation.

3. The use of "convergence theory" to reach a conclusion.

DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENTS OF VIOLENCE

Central to the issue of the impact of television viewing on violent behavior is the very definition of the term violence. When we talk about the need for a definition, we must consider two separate issues: (1) the definition of violent actions or depictions within television programs, and (2) the definition and measurement of violence and/or aggressive behavior.

Defining Violent Content

The problems involved with arriving at a definition of violence are many because violence is not always obvious and clearcut. The circumstances under which an action occurs, the acceptability of the action by a culture's norms and mores, and the use of an action as self-protection are all examples which can radically alter whether or not an action is considered violent.

Nevertheless, we can arrive at a useful practical definition: "Violence is the purposeful, antisocial infliction of pain for personal gain or gratification that is intended to harm the victim and is accomplished in spite of societal sanctions against it." (Krattenmaker and Powe). Obvious as this definition might be, there are a number of researchers who would strongly disagree. Some, for example, would insist upon calling any action in which pain is inflicted, even in self defense, violent. Others would want to expand the definition to include unintentional violence such as accidents, slapstick comedy, or even acts of nature like a hurricane or tornado.

Scientists have been arguing over definition for years and we won't resolve the disagreement here. The point, however, is that the way in which violence is defined will play a large part in determining the amount of violence which is found in program content. So it's important to keep in mind the specific definition of violence employed in any particular study. It is also important to recognize that when different studies use different definitions of violence, we can't compare their findings.

Defining and Measuring Violent Behavior

Controversy over the definition of violent content is only one aspect of the debate.* Of equal importance — and equally controversial — is the way in which scientists attempt to *measure* violent or aggressive behavior. In order to address the question of television's impact on behavior, we must first be able to define, identify, and measure violent behavior. Otherwise how can we know that there has been any effect at all?

The crucial question, of course, is whether or not exposure to television violence causes its occurrence in real life. The concern which everyone has is over *real* violence: the purposeful, anti-social infliction of pain which is intended to harm a victim or destroy property. Of course, it is simply impossible to observe this kind of behavior in research subjects on a systematic basis. Consequently, researchers have substituted other measures which can be observed and analyzed. But these measures are not violent behaviors as we commonly define the term. For example, research studies have measured violence with paper and pencil tests; by asking children to rate their classmates as to who is most aggressive during play, by observing children playing in a schoolyard; and during laboratory experiments by requesting a subject to ostensibly inflict electric shocks on others.

We might assume that the violence which the studies refer to is anti-social, harmful violence but in reality it isn't. The research doesn't address the crucial question with which we are all concerned: "Does exposure to television violence cause people to commit actual violence?" As two critics of the current violence research have stated, "The social science research to date simply has not left this question unanswered; it has left it unasked." (Krattenmaker and Powe)

USE OF CORRELATION TO IMPLY CAUSATION

The NIMH report concludes that a cause-effect relationship between television viewing and aggressive behavior has been clearly established. This assumption is based on a variety of studies which utilize "correlational" techniques.

Few research techniques create as much confusion and are subject to as much misinterpretation as correlation. A correlation is simply a statistical measure of the interrelationship or association between two different variables. The problem with a correlation is that while it can tell us the degree to which two things are related, it can not tell us which came first nor whether one caused the other. In fact, it is often the case that despite a high correlation between two things, the association is actually being caused by a third condition which affects the other two.

For example, consider the fact that there is a high correlation between sales of bathing suits and sales of ice cream. Thus, it would appear that the sale of bathing suits and the sale of ice cream are related since as one goes up, so does the other. However, we can never say that bathing suit sales *causes* ice cream consumption to rise, nor can we say that the increase in ice cream sales *causes* people to buy more bathing suits. It is more than likely that neither really has much to do with the other despite the fact that they are highly correlated. Rather, it is because both bathing suit sales and ice cream sales are affected by a third condition: hot weather during the summer months. It is this external third condition which actually causes both the sale of bathing suits and the sale of ice cream to rise (Agnew and Pyke).

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*It should be noted that there is no universally acknowledged definition of the terms "violent" and "aggressive" as they are applied to behavior. Since most researchers use the terms interchangeably, we will consider them synonymous.

The point is, correlation can never tell us anything about causation. Thus, when we talk about correlation between television viewing and aggressive behavior, all we are really saying is that there seems to be some relationship between the two. And when a causal relationship does exist (determined by other methods) a correlation does not necessarily indicate which of the two variables is the cause and which is the effect.

A correlation between viewing television violence and aggressive behavior could be produced by any of the following: (1) viewing violence leads to aggression, (2) aggressive tendencies lead to viewing violence, (3) both viewing violence and aggressive behavior are the products of a third condition or set of conditions such as age, sex, income, or family socio-economic level.

In those correlational field studies which do control for these third factors, the extremely small levels of association between television and behavior virtually disappear. This indicates that the "relationship" between television viewing and subsequent behavior is more likely the result of a variety of external conditions which have absolutely nothing to do with television itself. Some of these third variables include the level of aggressivity among peers, parental behavior (aggressivity, anger, etc.), parent child interaction (ways children are punished, nurtured, etc.), demographic factors, and intelligence.

Another important point to remember about correlation is the strength of the association and the amount of behavior which it can "explain." Correlations of 1.0 are "perfect" in that they indicate that there is a direct relationship between two variables. A correlation of zero indicates absolutely no relationship. Correlations which run from zero to .20 indicate very weak relationships; those which run from .20 to .60 indicate moderate relationships and those running from .60 to 1.0 indicate strong relationships.

Virtually every study cited by the NIMH report found correlations of less than .20 in associating television viewing with behavior. This weak correlation combined with the inability of correlation to determine causality indicates that the NIMH's conclusion is unwarranted.

THE USE OF CONVERGENCE THEORY

The NIMH report acknowledges that no single study conclusively links viewing television with violent behavior. However, the Advisory Panel insists that because there is a "convergence" of scientific evidence their conclusion is justified. In social science, convergence — the analysis of many different studies which point in the same basic direction — is sometimes used when no definitive evidence can be found to clearly support a position. The problem, however, is that the use of convergence can perpetuate unintended biases, flaws, or illogical assumptions which may exist within even a large body of research literature. It was the application of the convergence approach which led to the widespread belief among the scientific community of the time that the world was flat, and that the sun revolved around the earth. By relying on a similar approach and by refusing to challenge basic assumptions, a variety of scientists made the same mistake despite the fact that convergence theory would suggest that they were all correct.

REVIEW OF NIMH STUDIES

The NIMH technical chapter on violence and aggression in Volume II cites 14 studies which the author suggests proves a positive relationship between television and violence and which the NIMH report relies upon to reach it's conclusion of a cause-effect relationship.

Of these 14 studies half were conducted in foreign countries with cultures, norms, and programming much different than those found in the United States. Approximately one-third of the studies were unpublished and consequently were never subjected to scientific peer review and evaluation. Two studies were not even cited as research investigations but were reported as "personal communication" between the researcher and the NIMH author. The lack of scientific documentation in a number of cited studies makes a thorough analysis and evaluation of the work impossible. Further, a number of significant studies which the author uses to substantiate his case for causality were, in fact, either written by the author himself or by his colleagues.

Despite the assertion of a distinct cause-effect relationship between television and aggression, only four field-experiments (which contain the only type of research methods which can support such a causal claim) were reviewed. Of the four, one found no relationship between television viewing and aggressive behavior (Milgram and Shotland); one found no long-term effects (Parke, *et. al.*); one found no differences in the level of aggressive behavior between viewers and non-viewers (Loye, *et. al.*); the one which did find an effect used delinquent Belgian adolescents who were exposed to unedited theatrical motion pictures and not television programming (Leyens, *et. al.*). Further, elements in the design of the Leyens study preclude a valid causal interpretation. (For a thorough evaluation of each of these studies the reader is referred to the appendix.)

The remaining studies are not able to adequately address the question of causality. In these field surveys, the relationship between television and aggression was quite small. Few, if any, statistical controls were employed to take into account third variables which could affect the relationship. However, when statistical controls were used, the relationship between television and aggression was reduced to insignificance. For example, in one study (Hartnagel), the results showed a small positive relationship between television and aggressive behavior. Further analysis revealed that this relationsnip was spurious once third variables such as sex and grades in school were taken into account. The TV and aggression relationship was reduced to zero. The technical report chapter only cites the first part of this analysis, however, and it fails to mention that the relationship between television and aggression was not established in subsequent analyses.

There are two other studies cited by the NIMH which merit a brief mention. The first was conducted by Belson and investigated the relationship between television and aggressive behavior among adolescent boys in London. Although the NIMH report states that Belson found a relationship between television and aggression, in fact, the relationship was not straightforward. Those boys who viewed a great deal of television and those who viewed little television tended to behave *less* aggressively than did moderate viewers. This finding — not reported by the NIMH — runs counter to the report's conclusion that there is a positive and direct relationship between the amount of television viewed and subsequent aggressive behavior.

The only new research report on television and violence in the NIMH report is a study conducted by NBC (Milavsky, *et. al.*). The study was conducted in two U.S. cities over a three year period and employed a number of highly sophisticated research techniques designed to eliminate many of the technical criticisms which have invalidated previous research efforts. The NBC findings do not support the NIMH conclusion of a causal relationship between television and aggressive behavior. Although the study appears in its own chapter in the NIMH report, it is not discussed in the chapter on violence which the Advisory Panel relied on in drawing its conclusion.

In sum, a review of the studies and their findings strongly indicates that the NIMH Advisory Panel's conclusion of a causal relationship between television and violence is ill-founded and unsupported by any of the research data which is currently available.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 2

There is a clear consensus among most researchers that television violence leads to aggressive behavior.

ABC RESPONSE:

There exists a significant debate within the research community over the relationship between television and aggressive behavior.

The NIMH panel arrives at this conclusion based upon two points: first, that a majority of academic researchers believe that a causal relationship exists between television and aggressive behavior; and second, that the sheer number of scientific studies in the literature supports the contention as opposed to the number of studies which do not.

THE OPINION OF RESEARCHERS

In fact, there is no consensus among researchers regarding the relationship between television and aggression, and a spirited debate continues within the scientific community. In a recent study (Bybee), 486 academic researchers were asked their professional opinion of the influence of television on aggressive behavior. Only 1% reported that television was "the cause" of aggressive behavior. Further, the majority did not feel that television was an important contributory cause of aggressive behavior. Clearly this is not a consensus.

SCIENTIFIC STUDIES

While it is true that there are more studies published in the literature which have found some effect between television viewing and aggressive behavior, this says more about the academic research process and the criteria employed for publication in scientific journals than it does about the television violence issue. It is an acknowledged fact (Krattenmaker and Powe) that research studies which report an effect are far more likely to be accepted for publication that those studies which do not find an effect. Since editors naturally prefer to report results, publication policies can result in a distortion of the scientific evidence which actually exists. In the academic research field, where an individual's professional standing is based largely on published work, there is a real incentive for researchers to produce studies which do demonstrate an effect.

RESEARCH REVIEWS OF NO TELEVISION EFFECT

The research literature on television and violence has been reviewed and evaluated by other academic scientists than those who participated in the NIMH study. Although many have concluded that the research evidence does not support the conclusion that television violence causes aggressive behavior, (Lesser, Noble, Kaplan & Singer, Howitt & Cumberbatch, Sife, Armour, and Kniveton) their work was ignored by the NIMH panel.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 3

Despite slight variations over the past decade, the amount of violence on television has remained at consistently high levels.

ABC RESPONSE:

There has been a decrease in the overall amount of violence in recent years.

The only way to address the question of how much violence is on television is to systematically analyze a representative sample of television programming by conducting a "content analysis." To accurately identify content trends, these analyses must be performed over a period of years. Only two such content analyses were included in the NIMH report. Of these two analyses only one—by Dr. George Gerbner and his colleagues at the University of Pennsylvania—is used by the NIMH to support its view that violent content has remained at a consistently high level.

Since 1967, Gerbner and his associates have produced the yearly Violence Profile—an analysis of the violent content of network television programming—research that has been supported by NIMH funding. An additional conflict is the fact that Dr. Gerbner is a member of the NIMH Advisory Panel which is responsible for the report and for its conclusions.

The other major content analysis study included in the NIMH report is conducted annually by the CBS Office of Social Research. The CBS study and the Gerbner study utilize radically different definitions of violence and consequently arrive at very different conclusions. While Gerbner maintains that violence is at a consistently high level, the CBS data indicates that the level of violence has decreased over the past decade. Since the NIMH relies so heavily upon the work of Dr. Gerbner and his colleagues, we will first analyze their content analysis and then compare it with the CBS study.

THE GERBNER CONTENT ANALYSIS

The Gerbner content analyses have generated a great deal of controversy within the research community (Newcomb, Cohn and Tuchman, Blank). Criticisms focus on three major issues:

1. The definition of violence which Gerbner uses.

2. The index which Gerbner constructs and uses to report the amounts of violence in programming.

3. The sample which is analyzed and used to generalize to a full-year season.

Definition of Violence in Programming

The way in which violence in program content is defined is crucial because more than anything else, it affects the study's findings and conclusions. Earlier we discussed the difficulty in arriving at a commonly agreed-upon definition of violence. Gerbner defines violence as: "The overt expression of physical force against self or other, compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing." What makes the Gerbner definition unique is that this definition is applied not only to serious and realistic depictions of violence, but is expanded to *include* comedy and slapstick, accidents, and acts of nature such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes.

By employing such a definition, the Gerbner analyses arrive at violence figures which distort the amount of realistic violence actually on television. For example, in a number of Gerbner content studies, over one-third of all the violence counted did *not* result from human action but was caused by accidents or acts of nature. Without an understanding of the violence definition, we would incorrectly attribute far more violence to programming than actually exists.

The Violence Index

Gerbner uses a Violence Index to measure the amount of violence on network television. A number of researchers (Krattenmaker and Powe, Blank, Owen) have concluded that the Violence Index is an arbitrary and idiosyncratic measure which does not accurately reflect program content. Rather than simply count the number of violent incidents per program, Gerbner combines various numerical scores, some of which are weighted to reflect his own theories and controversial assumptions. For example, the Violence Index arbitrarily *doubles* the "rate of violent episodes per program," *doubles* the "rate of violent episodes per hour of programs," and combines together percentages with straightforward numerical sums. In response to this overwhelming criticism of the Index, Gerbner replies, "The rates are doubled in order to raise their relatively low numerical values to the importance that the concepts . . . deserve."

By adding together the research equivalent of "apples and oranges," the Index provides a biased and inaccurate picture of television content. As one noted researcher commented, "One is always free to add apples and oranges if one wishes, but it isn't at all clear what the result means, and some people may take it seriously" (Owen).

Sample

Gerbner and his colleagues utilize a one-week sample of prime-time network programming to generalize about the entire yearly television season. The use of one week's worth of programming to represent the total content of a 52 week season is clearly inadequate.

THE CBS CONTENT ANALYSIS

The CBS study uses a 13 week sample of prime time network programming to represent a full year, clearly a more adequate, representative sample than Gerbner's. CBS also employs a more reasonable definition of violence: "The use of physical force against persons or animals, or the articulated, explicit threat of physical force to compel particular behavior on the part of a person." This definition attempts to analyze only realistic violence and consequently excludes from the analysis accidents, acts of nature, and comedy or slapstick.

The CBS findings have shown a measured downward trend in the amount of violent program content among the three networks from 1973 through 1981, the last year for which data are available. Although the CBS study offers a much different picture of violent content than does the Gerbner study, the NIMH report dismisses their findings without comment.

Other Content Analysis Studies

Only the Gerbner and CBS studies measure television content over a long enough period of time to permit any sort of trends to be identified and measured. The NIMH report does mention a number of one-time content analysis studies but they are of little value in addressing the primary question. For example, one study cited by the NIMH utilized the capsule program descriptions in *TV Guide* as the method of analyzing the violence which appeared in programming.

NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 4

Television has been shown to cultivate television-influenced attitudes among viewers. Heavy viewers are more likely to be more fearful and less trusting of other people than are light viewers as a result of their exposure to television.

ABC RESPONSE:

The research does not support the conclusion that television significantly cultivates viewer attitudes and perceptions of social reality.

The cultivation theory suggests that viewers absorb a unique and biased "social reality" from watching television. According to the theory, which has been put forth by Dr. George Gerbner, television presents a distorted reflection of the world which does not accurately represent what exists in real life. Consequently, people who watch television will perceive the world from a "television perspective" and not as it really is.

Although the NIMH Advisory Panel indicates that the case for this cultivation theory has been clearly established, the authors of the technical report chapter reach a different conclusion. They state, "The evidence concerning the causal direction of television's impact on social reality is not sufficient for strong conclusions" (Hawkins and Pingree).

As in the case of the content issue, the NIMH relies almost exclusively on the research of Dr. Gerbner and his associates to substantiate their claim that the cultivation theory is true. Although a number of other researchers have conducted work in this area, over half of all the studies reviewed by the NIMH were either conducted by Gerbner himself or by his associates. Thus, his methods and conclusions are clearly central to the issue of cultivation.

A number of independent researchers have been strongly critical of the cultivation hypothesis and of the research that supports it. Their criticisms address three key issues:

1. The use of correlation to imply causation.

2. The methods by which attitudes are measured.

3. The application of certain research techniques in attempting to answer the research question.

USE OF CORRELATION TO IMPLY CAUSATION

The cultivation hypothesis states that television viewing causes distorted social attitudes and perceptions. Although the cultivation research utilizes correlational techniques, the theory's proponents interpret the findings to suggest causality. As we have demonstrated earlier, correlation can not indicate cause and effect. Further, in every cultivation study reported by the NIMH report, the correlation between television viewing and an individual's attitudes are extremely small, when they are found at all. In most cases, only 3% of a person's social attitudes are related to television viewing. In other words, 97% of a person's attitudes and perceptions are related to factors *other* than exposure to television.

What is especially significant is that television's miniscule relationship to social perceptions decreases even further when we consider such important external conditions as the individual's age, sex, race, and place of residence. Once these variables are taken into account, the cultivation effect of television on social attitudes and behaviors is virtually non-existent.

MEASURING ATTITUDES

The second area of criticism regarding cultivation research concerns the way in which viewer's attitudes and perceptions are measured. Individuals are asked a series of questions: one possible answer being the "TV answer," which the researchers say reflects how the world is shown on television, and the other response, a "real world" answer, which the researchers say reflects how the world really is. For example, a respondent might be asked to estimate how likely they are to be a victim of crime. Overestimating their chances of victimization is considered the "TV answer" since the researchers believe that exposure to violence on television cultivates fear and mistrust. Critics of the cultivation theory suggest the questions which are asked are highly selective, and items which do not support the cultivation theory are simply omitted. In addition, the "TV answer" is often arbitrarily determined by the researchers (Hirsch). Further, it has been found that on occasion, of the two responses from which an individual must choose, *both* were incorrect. Thus, the respondent is placed in the situation of having to select an answer when the only alternatives available are both wrong (Krattenmaker and Powe).

RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

One of the major criticisms of the cultivation theory involves the various procedures which are used to investigate the hypothesis. A number of researchers have attempted to replicate the findings of Gerbner and his colleagues and were unable to find the effects which were predicted by the cultivation theory (Hughes, Doob and MacDonald, Wober).

Other researchers have been highly critical of specific methods. For example, a number of studies used a sliding baseline in segmenting individuals into the crucial "heavy" and "light" viewing categories which, according to the theory, determines how they will perceive the world. Instead of establishing a strict definition of "heavy" and "light" viewers, these categories are frequently determined by the idiosyncracies of each sample. Further, although the categories are not consistent from study to study, findings are compared as though they were identical. For example, in one study school children who watched three hours of television were classified as "heavy" viewers; in another, children who watched three hours were classified as "light" viewers (Hirsch).

Another point of criticism is that cultivation researchers group together viewers who fall into differing categories. When these groups are analyzed separately, the findings do not support the cultivation theory. For example, cultivation researchers group "non-viewers" who don't watch television with "light" viewers who watch less than average. When non-viewers are analyzed independently of light viewers, their fear and mistrust scores are actually *higher* than light viewers. Similarly, "extremely heavy viewers" are grouped with "heavy viewers." When extremely heavy viewers — who view eight or more hours of television daily — are analyzed independently, they are found to be *less* fearful and mistrusting than heavy viewers (Hirsch). In both of these instances, when unlike groups were analyzed separately, the findings were in direct opposition to what the cultivation theory predicts.

Overall, when the cultivation theory is examined closely, it is found to be far less compelling than the NIMH report indicates. Consequently, there is no justification for the strong conclusions which the Advisory Panel reached.

ABC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Conflict is a legitimate aspect of literature and drama yet we also recognize the sensitivity and care we must exercise when considering its use. ABC Television has established policies and procedures which enable us to handle violence and other controversial themes responsibly and tastefully. We make every effort to maintain the integrity of the storyline but we do not accept the gratuitous use of violence nor do we tolerate stories that glorify violence or suggest that violence is without consequences to those who use it. The care and concern with which we approach violence is indicated by the various procedures and resources which we utilize in the evaluation of dramatic material and is outlined in the following section.

BROADCAST STANDARDS AND PRACTICES DEPARTMENT

All entertainment series and specials are produced under the scrutiny of the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department (BS&P). Each program script is carefully reviewed by Broadcast Standards and Practices editors and every violent action within the script is carefully evaluated. Each violent action must have a thematic justification and the depiction should portray only the minimum necessary to maintain the integrity of the storyline. Gratuitous or excessive violence is eliminated and unique and detailed depictions of violent actions which might be copied or emulated are either modified or eliminated.

In addition to reviewing all scripts, every program is screened and approved in a rough-cut and final form by the Broadcast Standards and Practices editing staff before the program is considered acceptable for broadcast on ABC.

One of the tools which the Broadcast Standards and Practices editors use in evaluating program content is the Incident Classification and Analysis Form (ICAF) system. The ICAF was developed by the BS&P Department in conjunction with social scientists from the ABC Social Research Unit. The ICAF enables every editor to systematically categorize, quantify, and weigh every violent incident within a program and provides editors with a qualitative and quantitative measure of a given program's violent content.

The ICAF system is especially useful because it not only counts incidents of violence but differentiates the severity of the violence and considers the overall context within which the violence is portrayed. The ICAF system enables the BS&P editor to identify those elements within a program which may be excessive and gratuitous and is an important aspect in the overall evaluation of program content.

The ICAF system is continuously monitored and reviewed by the ABC Social Research Unit. This procedure maintains its high levels of reliability and validity and ensures that the ICAF remains a sensitive and accurate instrument for the identification and categorization of violent program content. Used in conjunction with the editor's professional judgement, the ICAF is a highly effective tool for maintaining ABC's standards of acceptability and appropriateness.

ABC SOCIAL RESEARCH UNIT

The Social Research Unit is a part of the ABC Marketing and Research Services Department. One of its functions is to provide support services to Broadcast Standards and Practices. In addition to the administration of the ICAF System, the Social Research Unit provides BS&P with relevant research information to ensure that all policies and guidelines reflect the most current data available. Contemporary social science research is reviewed on a continuing basis and plays an important role in maintaining appropriate standards for the portrayal of violence in programming. In addition to reviewing research which appears in the scientific literature, the Social Research Unit conducts a number of proprietary studies which are designed to assess the impact of our programming on viewers and to survey audience attitudes toward depictions of sensitive program material.

Another related activity of the Social Research Unit is to conduct workshops and seminars for the Broadcast Standards editing staff. Training workshops are an important element in professional growth and are held on a regular basis. This service ensures that established policy guidelines are consistently and accurately applied to the evaluation of all ABC programming.

At a typical training workshop, representatives from the Social Research Unit, as well as outside expert consultants, discuss and evaluate editing policies and procedures. The case study approach is frequently used and has proven to be an excellent method in increasing and refining the abilities of the Broadcast Standards editors. In addition, ICAF procedures are regularly reviewed to retain the high reliability levels of the coding and to refine and improve the overall ICAF system.

The goal of these workshops and seminars is to increase the capability of the Broadcast Standards and Practices editors by improving their editing skills and by broadening their perspective and understanding of the viewing audience.

CONCLUSION

At the very beginning of this booklet we indicated the complexity of the television violence issue. Our review of the scientific literature demonstrates how true that statement is. Research is clearly a valuable means by which we can understand more about the medium of television and its social impact. But research is only useful after we have assessed each study's strengths and weaknesses and placed it in its proper perspective. Our analysis of the research which the NIMH has used to substantiate their conclusions regarding television and violence indicates that there are more unanswered questions than there are definitively settled issues.

At the same time we recognize our responsibility to ensure that when violence is presented in the context of a dramatic program, there exists a legitimate and thematic justification for its inclusion. Further, it is our practice to limit the portrayal of violence to that which is reasonably related to plot development and character delineation. The excessive depiction of violence is rarely necessary and gratuitous portrayals are considered inappropriate for the television medium.

We believe that ABC's policies and procedures have proven to be an excellent method of exercising our responsibility. We will continue to demonstrate care and concern in the future by providing our viewers with programming which meets the highest standards of appropriateness and social responsibility.

APPENDIX

EVALUATING RESEARCH

Research is a valuable tool for expanding our understanding of the television medium. But research must be carefully analyzed, evaluated, and interpreted in order to be effective. There is no such thing as a "perfect" research study. Every study has strengths and weaknesses which must be taken into account when interpreting the research and conclusions from the study's findings.

The ABC Social Research Unit continually reviews social science research as it appears in the scientific literature. Each study is subjected to a rigorous analysis so we can accurately determine how much confidence—if any—should be placed in the results.

Although scientific research is often sophisticated and complex, there are three key elements which should be considered when evaluating any study. These include:

1. **The study sample.**
2. **The research approach which is used.**
3. **The size of the effects under investigation.**

SAMPLING

A sample is a specifically selected sub-group which researchers use to represent a much larger group. A sample can be made up of individuals—for example television viewers—or it can be a group of programs—as in the analysis of violent content. Regardless of what the specific sample is, all samples must be "representative" of the larger population in order to be useful.

If a sample is not representative—that is, if there are unintended biases inherent within the small group which is studied—serious errors in findings and conclusions can result. It was an unrepresentative sample which led pollsters to erroneously conclude that Thomas Dewey would defeat Harry Truman in the 1948 Presidential election.

Creating a representative sample is one of the most difficult and crucial aspects of any research study. In order to provide accurate representation, a "probability" sample must be developed. This means that elements within the sample are randomly selected to ensure that they are as representative of the larger group as possible. In such sciences as chemistry, biology, and physics, sampling problems rarely exist to the extent that they do in such social sciences as psychology and sociology—the disciplines most involved with television research. For example, a medical researcher who wishes to examine a patient's blood need only draw a small amount to provide a representative sample of a person's overall blood composition. In addition, the blood sample can be taken from almost anywhere on the body and will still be representative of the person's overall blood make-up.

In social science research, however, the researcher must be careful to obtain a sample which represents all geographic locations, as well as a broad range of individuals, so that it accurately mirrors all of the characteristics of the total population. For example, if we are interested in the effects of television on school children, we must make certain that the sample is geographically diverse to include children from all regions of the country, that it contains the same proportionate amount of children in each age group as exists in the total population of children, and that such important factors as the sex, family income, and intelligence level of the children in the sample represent the characteristics of the child population at large.

RESEARCH APPROACHES

Social science research designed to assess the effects of television violence employs one of the following four approaches: *laboratory experiments, field studies, experimental field studies, and clinical case studies.*

Laboratory Experiments

Laboratory experiments are designed to establish causal inference. This is accomplished by carefully controlling the experimental stimulus (TV program) and viewing situation and then observing the subject's behavior under very controlled conditions. This permits a more direct inference of a causal relationship between the content of the test program and subsequent behavior. One must pay for this control, however, by using an artificial testing environment and by dealing with the many logistical difficulties in testing subjects. Consequently, lab experiments test relatively few subjects, and quite often the subjects are selected for their ready availability to the experimenter (such as college students enrolled in a basic psychology course or children or adults who are institutionalized in a school, hospital, or prison). This can lead to serious difficulties in applying the findings from the test subjects to a larger, normal population. In addition, critics of laboratory experiments charge that the programs which the subjects view are not representative of the kinds of programming which are broadcast on commercial television, making the tests unrealistic and the results highly suspect.

A serious criticism of the laboratory approach involves the way scientists attempt to measure violent behavior. Since it is obviously impossible to ask a subject to actually strike another person, some researchers have asked subjects to manipulate controls which would administer electric shocks to a person who is ostensibly in another room. The intensity, frequency, and duration of the shocks are recorded and form the basis for measuring aggressive behavior. The question, of course, is whether administering shocks — under the supervision and encouragement of a research scientist — is the same as behaving violently in the real world. Furthermore, the subjects are often told that the electric shocks are not really harmful and that the uncomfortable, but harmless, shocks will "help" the other person to learn an assigned experimental task.

Another important aspect of the laboratory approach is that in virtually every study, most of the measureable effects occurred only when subjects were initially angered or frustrated by the experimenter and then were exposed to a violent clip from a program or movie. The necessity to combine anger and frustration with television and then to measure behavior *immediately* afterward may not accurately reflect a real world situation outside the laboratory.

Finally, in many experimental studies involving young children, researchers have used playful imitations of what the children saw on screen as a measure of aggression. In some of the classic studies, children watch an adult punch a "Bobo" doll which is designed to bounce-back after it is struck. After exposure to the television material, the child is placed in a playroom with an identical Bobo doll and his or her actions are observed. The researchers consider a child who is likely to imitate the on-screen behavior by punching the Bobo doll as behaving aggressively. However, the fact that the doll was designed specifically to be used in this manner renders this measurement technique questionable.

Field Studies

A field study, as its name suggests, is conducted in a subject's natural environment as opposed to the laboratory study, which usually takes place in a contrived and unnatural setting. Field studies typically use a much larger number of subjects than do most experimental studies. Since all possible variables can not be controlled as in a laboratory experiment, field studies do not permit the researcher to determine a direct cause-effect relationship except under some very special circumstances which we will discuss in the following section.

Field studies frequently employ one of three possible approaches: *the field survey, the panel survey, and a field experiment.*

FIELD SURVEY In a field survey, respondents are usually asked a series of questions by an interviewer or are asked to complete a written questionnaire. The questionnaires frequently measure the amount and type of programming which is watched, and measure other sorts of characteristics such as the level of aggressivity as measured with a pencil and paper test. Using statistical methods, the scientist attempts to correlate, or relate certain characteristics (such as exposure to television violence) with some behavioral variable (such as high aggressivity).

Sometimes researchers measure behavior by observing individuals in their natural surroundings. A common method of measuring aggressivity among school children is to simply observe them at play during recess. What is crucial however, is that the observers be kept "blind" or uninformed as to the nature of the study. In other words, telling observers to look specifically for violent behavior can produce unintended "findings" because the observers might, consciously or unconciously, be biased to find aggressive behavior. While this may seem to be a research problem which can easily be accounted for, in reality, a number of researchers have shown that this unintended "demand" effect can seriously bias research findings and subsequent analysis (Rosenthal and Jacobson). Of course, a larger question is whether or not observing children at play is an appropriate substitute for the measurement of actual violence.

PANEL SURVEY A panel survey is very similar to a field survey except that the same respondents are surveyed at two or more points in time in order to permit the researcher to infer some aspects of cause-effect. However, cause-effect relationships under any sort of survey approach are highly questionable and subject to a great deal of misinterpretation because so many external variables remain unaccounted for.

The special "cross-lagged" analysis which is employed by two of the studies cited in the NIMH report (Eron & Huesmann, and Singer & Singer) which the NIMH suggests can be used to infer causality have, in fact, been shown to be invalid in making such causal connections (Bohrnstedt, Duncan, Cook and Campbell, Rogosa, Kessler and Greenberg). Appropriate techniques are available to make such causal inferences, however, and were employed by the NBC study (Milavsky).

FIELD EXPERIMENT A field experiment is an attempt to obtain the best of both research worlds: the natural environment of the field study combined with the experimental approach's ability to infer causality. Of course in any compromise there is always a trade-off. In this case, it is the ability to establish a *definitive* cause-effect relationship. No matter how rigorously the researcher attempts to control for external variables, it is simply impossible to account for every external circumstance in a natural setting, as opposed to the unnatural, but completely controlled, laboratory situation.

A serious problem which is frequently encountered in field experiments is the use of "intact groups." An intact group is simply a group of individuals (such as all children in a particular school class) who are selected as one of the experimental groups in a field experiment. A true experiment uses two (or more) equal and identical groups; one is subject to experimental manipulation (in this case, a television program with violence) and the other to the control situation (such as a neutral television show without any violence). The researcher makes the groups equal and identical at the start of the experiment by randomly assigning the subject to one of the experimental groups. With all essential aspects of the two groups being as equal as possible, behavioral changes can be attributed to the one thing which was different: exposure to the different television programs. However, when an experimental group is comprised solely of individuals from the same intact group, then third variables are not controlled. The experimental groups are not equal and identical at the start of the experiment. Any behavioral changes that occur may be due to: (1) original differences in the group, or (2) differences in the experimental manipulation (TV programs). For example, when an intact school class is used in a violence study it is possible that the differences in children's aggressive behavior may be due to differences in the way the teacher controls discipline; some teachers are more strict than others. If a researcher uses two intact groups and assigns one group (teacher very strict — does not allow any rough play) to the "violent TV show," and the "control" group (teacher very lenient — allows a lot of rough play) the "non-violent TV show," a misleading conclusion concerning the impact of television could result. The differences in behavior could be due to either the different program content or to the original difference of the intact groups — the degree of the teacher's discipline.

Clinical Studies

The clinical case method is less commonly used in social science research because the sample size is often extremely small which makes generalization to the population at large difficult and unreliable. Nonetheless, clinical studies are valuable when researchers are interested in probing in-depth to discern motivation and similar underlying reasons for attitudes and behaviors. Clinical studies are also very useful when special populations such as delinquent adolescents, exceptional children, or other non-normative subjects are of interest.

APPENDIX

EFFECTS SIZE

When researchers talk about "effects," they are referring to the ability to explain or predict behavior or attitudes as a result of previous exposure to a particular variable, in this case, television. Therefore, when we refer to the size of the effect of a particular study, we are asking how significant a relationship exists between television and behavior or attitudes.

Despite the various conclusions and resulting implications which NIMH Advisory Panel attributes to the research studies they reviewed, the size of the effects reported are extremely small. Even if one were to accept the various methodological and technical flaws inherent in many of the studies, the amount of behavioral or attitudinal change which can be attributed directly to television is insignificant.

The way in which researchers estimate the amount of contribution which television makes on behavior or attitudes is to square -- or multiply by itself -- the correlation coefficient figure which is reported in the studies. For example, assume we have a study which indicates that there is a correlation of .11 between viewing television and aggressive behavior when there are no controls applied for external third variables, and a correlation of .06 when such variables as sex, race, and place of residence are taken into account. By squaring these figures (.11 x .11 = .01 and .06 x .06 = .004) we see that television accounts for 1 per cent of aggressive behavior without controls and less than 1/2 of one percent of aggressive behavior when controls are applied. In other words, over 99 per cent of the reason behind the individual's aggressive behavior must be attributed to factors other than television.

The effects size is a very important consideration when evaluating research since it is often possible to find relationships which, in fact, are virtually meaningless when the true magnitude of the relationship is assessed.

REVIEW OF RESEARCH

Following are brief reviews and analyses of the fourteen studies cited in the NIMH Technical Paper on Violence and Aggression to support the relationship between television and subsequent behavior. Also included is a review of the Milavsky *et. al.* NBC Study. Although it was not included in the NIMH technical chapter on violence, it is the only new study on the subject, and was reported at length in a section of its own in the NIMH report.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
BELSON, W. *Television Violence and the Adolescent Boy.* London: Saxon House, 1978.	Field Survey	1565 London boys in the age range 12-17 years. This was a *probability* sample.	Television violence exposure was measured by asking the boys about their viewing a representative sample of all programs broadcast between 1959 and 1971. Fifty judges then rated the programs for 25 different forms of violence. A boy's violence score was a sum of the products of exposure to each show and the violence rating for each show. Involvement in violent behavior was measured by asking the boys if they had committed any of 53 violent acts in the last 6 months.	■ Controls for third variables were performed in an unorthodox manner developed by the author. Traditional, simultaneous controls for important third variables were not performed. Instead, post hoc matching of high and low viewers was attempted on a number of third variables. Matching procedures are weak in causal analysis. ■ Foreign sample. ■ High viewers of televised violence were about as aggressive as low viewers of televised violence. ■ Approximately half of the sample did not engage in any violent acts. ■ The author acknowledges that despite his matching procedures, his research does not eliminate the possibility that the reverse causal hypothesis — aggressive boys like to watch violent programs — is true.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
ERON, L.D. & HUESMANN, L.R. Adolescent Aggression and Television. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1980, 347, 319-331.	Panel Survey of 3 years	758 first and third grade children in a Chicago suburb. This was a *non-probability* sample.	Television violence was measured by asking children how frequently they viewed their eight most watched TV shows. Two psychology students then rated these shows for their amount of visually portrayed physical aggression. A child's TV violence score was the sum of the violence ratings for their eight most frequently watched shows, weighted by the frequency with which they watched the programs. Aggressive behavior was measured by peer-nominated ratings and self-ratings of aggression. The latter included items in which the child rated how similar they were to fictional children described as engaging in specific aggressive behavior.	■ The relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior ranged from .21 to .25. ■ Simultaneous control of important third variables (of which a number are included in the study) was not performed. ■ Details about which aggressive behavior measure (self-report or peer-nominated) was analysed in the correlations is not evident.
FRACZEK, A Personal Communication, February, 1980	Panel Survey	237 Children	No information provided.	■ Foreign culture. ■ No publicly available information. ■ No simultaneous controls of important third variables.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
GRANZBERG, G. & STEINBRING, J. Television and the Canadian Indian. Technical Report, Department of Anthropology, University of Winnipeg, 1[illegible]0.	Panel Survey over 5 years	Elementary school age, Canadian Indian boys living on reserves. Small samples in each community (about 50). These were *non-probability* samples.	Exposure to television was not measured. Instead communities with and without television were compared both before and after TV was introduced into one of the communities. These communities were compared on two variables: (1) Fear of victimization – whether or not the subjects completed a hypothetical situation described by the researchers as one that ended in a dangerous and violent manner. (2) Aggression – responses to questions about what the subjects would do in hypothetical situations. (What would you do if someone called you a name?) If they said they would retaliate in kind they were scored as aggressive.	■ The study has not been subjected to peer review or published in a journal. The technical report does not provide enough information to fully understand and evaluate exactly what the researchers did and what they found. Statistical tests are not sufficiently reported. ■ The sample is not representative and comes from another country and culture. They view different programs than we do. ■ The study design is weak because any differences observed among the communities could be due to a multitude of other factors besides television. ■ The introduction of televis. did not affect the mean levels of aggressive behavior exhibited in the communities. ■ Simultaneous controls of important third variables were not employed.
GREENBERG, B.S. British Children and Televised Violence. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1975, 38, 531-547.	Field Survey	726 children in the 9-12 and 15 year old age groups filled out questionnaires. This is a *non-probability* sample.	Television exposure was measured by a listing of 30 programs currently or recently aired in London. Violent program categories (programs in which acts of violence were common) included: (1) westerns; (2) action-adventure; (3) science fiction; and (4) mixed shows. Respondents checked if they watch each show *each week* or *almost every time it is on*. Aggressive *attitudes* were measured: (1) perceived effectiveness of using violence to solve problems; and (2) personal willingness to use violence to solve own problems.	■ The relationship between exposure to violence and aggressive attitudes was .15 to .17. However the relationship between exposure to non-violence and aggressive attitudes was .12 to .14 – almost identical. If television violence is supposed to cause aggressive behavior, it does not follow that non-violent programming is related to aggressive attitudes at almost the same level. ■ Simultaneous controls for third variables were not employed in this study. ■ The amount of violence in the programs was not reported.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
HARTNAGEL, T.F., TEEVAN, J.J. Jr., & McINTYRE, J.J. Television Violence and Violent Behavior. *Social Forces,* 1975, 54, 341-351.	Field Survey	A *probability sample* of 2290 junior high school and senior high school Maryland students responded to a questionnaire.	Television exposure was measured by asking respondents if they: (1) got into a serious fight with a student at school; (2) hurt someone badly enough for him to need bandages; and (3) took part in a fight where a group of your friends were against another group. The frequency of these behaviors was recorded and summed to form an index.	• The relationship between violent television exposure and violent behavior only was .12. When important third variables like sex, grade, race, father's occupation, educational expectations, family structure and school grades were controlled, this relationship was reduced to near zero. • The authors concluded television does not cause aggressive behavior.
LAGERSPETZ, K. Personal Communication, August, 1979.	Panel Survey	220 Children	No information provided.	• Foreign culture. • No publicly available information.
YENS, J.P., PARKE, R.D., AMINO, L., & BERKOWITZ, L. Effects of movie violence on aggression in a field setting as a function of group dominance and cohesion. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 1975, 32, 346-360.	Experimental Field Study	85 delinquent, secondary school boys in a Belgian institution. This is a *non probability* sample.	Television violence was not measured. Instead ten unedited commercial movies, some in English, others not in English were shown to the boys. Aggressive behavior was measured by observing the boys behavior over a period of time. Instances of aggression included: physical threats; physical attack; verbal aggression; damaging objects; loud outbursts not directed at others; self-aggression.	• No evidence was reported on long term physical aggresive effects. • Any differences reported in this study may be due to the intact groups that were used as much as the kind of films they viewed. Subjects were not randomly assigned to experimental conditions. Therefore the groups were not equal at the start of the study. Differences observed *can not* be attributed to the experimental manipulations. (In this case the movies the subjects saw.)

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
LOYE, D., GORNEY, R., & STEELE, G. Effects of Television: An experimental field study. *Journal of Communications*, 1977, 27 (3), 206-216.	Experimental Field Study	From a pool of 725 husband-and-wife couples recruited through announcements over Theta Cable Television in Los Angeles, 260 couples were induced to participate (6 months free cable service). This is a non probability sample.	Subjects were assigned one of five types of programming: (1) high in prosocial or helpful content (N=51); (2) high in violent or hurtful content (N=45); (3) neutral or light entertainment content (N=19); (4) mixed — both prosocial and violent content (N=25); and (5) natural content — view whatever they wished (N=43). Behavior was assessed by having wives record all instances of husbands "helpful" (husband took son for a walk on the beach) and "hurtful" (husband lost temper while driving car) behavior.	● Thirty percent of the subjects did not complete the study. Therefore the results are based on the behavior of 183 men. These men are not representative. They were predominantly Caucasian, also more affluent and better educated than the norm. ● In all likelihood wives knew what programs their husbands were viewing and therefore may have been influenced by demand characteristics of study. ● No indication of the nature of the hurtful behavior the wives reported was presented. If losing temper while driving was the most serious form of hurtful behavior, one must question the level of violence studied here. ● Differences in mean levels of hurtful behavior were not observed among the five groups of television watchers. ● Researchers had no real control over which programs viewers actually watched. Thus their five diets of TV may have been diluted. ● Subjects were not randomly assigned to the different television diets. Any differences among these groups can not be attributed to the television programs they viewed because they were not equal in all other respects. Many other third variables could be responsible for any differences observed. These important third variables were not controlled.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
MCCARTHY, E.D., LANGNER, T.S., GERSTEN, J.C., EISENBERG, J.G., & ORZECK, L. *Violence and behavioral disorders. Journal of Communication*, 1975, 25 (4), 71-85.	*Panel Field Survey*	Unknown number of mothers of children aged 6 to 18 living in Manhattan, N.Y.C. between Houston and 125th Streets. This was a *non-probability* sample. 732 children were the objects of analysis.	Television exposure was measured by asking the mothers what were their children's four favorite TV shows. Three researchers assigned each program a violence rating which ranged from 1 to 3. All News programming was assigned a 1.5; shows like *Brady Bunch* and *I Dream of Jeannie* received a 1; unspecified movies and many sports (like tennis and baseball) received a 2; shows like *NYPD*, *Mod Squad* and some sports (like wrestling and hockey) received a 3. A weighted violence score was calculated by taking the square root of the sum of the violence scores of the child's four favorite TV shows. This figure was then multiplied by the number of hours of TV watched daily by the child. Children's behavior was measured by asking mothers 654 questions about their children's behavior. These items were reduced to 40 items. These items made up 7 different scales. Of interest here are two scales: (1) fighting (teases other children; does not get along with other children at school); and (2) delinquency (does rash and dangerous things; in trouble with police).	● The relationships between violence viewing and fighting was .05 and between violence viewing and delinquency was zero. ● Simultaneous controls for third variables were not employed. ● Children were never asked a single question. All the data were derived from the mothers. ● The number of mothers sampled is not reported. Biases of any single mother would likely be carried over from her perceptions of one child to any other children she may have answered questions about. ● The weighted violence index is a contrived and artificial measure. ● While the authors report this as a panel survey, no longitudinal data are presented. ● Reliability estimates for violence ratings of the programs are not reported. The validity of the procedures used in the violence ratings must be questioned since tennis and baseball were rated as a 2. ● The sample was atypical having been derived entirely from Manhattan.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
MILAVSKY, J.R., KESSLER, R., STIPP, H., & RUBENS, W.S. Television and aggression: Results of a panel study. In D. Pearl, L. Bouthilet, and J. Lazar (Eds.), *Television and Behavior: Ten years of scientific progress and implications for the 80's*, (Vol. 2), Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1982.	Panel Survey covering a 3-year period	3,200 elementary and secondary school children in Minneapolis and Ft. Worth, aged 7 through 9.	Television violence exposure was measured by asking the children how frequently they viewed a representative sample of television programs. These scores were then weighted by the amount of violence contained in each program. Aggressive behavior was measured by the peer nomination procedure for elementary school children. For teenagers, self-reports were used. These included a number of different measures of aggressive behavior: *physical aggression* (trying to hurt someone by pushing and shoving, hitting or punching); *verbal aggression* (trying to hurt others by saying mean things, or lying to get someone in trouble); *stealing and damaging property, delinquency aggression* (serious criminal behaviors like knife fights, mugging, car theft or gang fight); and *aggression against a teacher* (unruliness or rudeness toward a teacher).	■ In a very sophisticated and detailed analysis, Milavsky *et. al.* were able to show that violent television exposure had no significant effect on subsequent aggressive behavior. ■ The results of this study are very compelling because of the greater validity, consistency and relevancy of the measuring instruments employed. ■ This study is of further importance because the authors were able to replicate the small correlation between exposure to televised violence and aggressive behavior measured at the same point in time. However, when other third variables were taken into account, this relationship was reduced to near zero. ■ When these data were analyzed over time, no support for the causal relationship was found. ■ No evidence was reported that the short-term laboratory type effects cumulate and generalize to day-to-day behavior. ■ These results were true not only for the entire sample, but also for sub-groups considered to be predisposed to aggressive behavior.
MILGRAM, S., & SHOTLAND, R.L. *Television and antisocial behavior: Field experiments.* New York: Academic Press, 1973.	Experimental Field Study	2,785 subjects participated in eight experiments conducted in NY, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit. Some programs were shown to subjects in theaters, while other programs were broadcast and tested in major markets	A *Medical Center* episode with several alternative endings formed the antisocial television program. Modeling of the antisocial actions were observed. These included smashing a charity display and stealing the money.	■ No significant differences were observed in the studies. Television did not lead to an increase in antisocial behavior. ■ Real television programs were studied in the natural environment in which they are viewed.

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
PARKE, R.D., BERKOWITZ, L., LEYENS, J.P., WEST, S., & SEBASTIAN, R.J. Some effects of violent and nonviolent movies on the behavior of juvenile delinquents. In L. Berkowitz, (Ed.) *Advances in experimental social psychology.* (Vol. 10), New York: Academic Press, 1977.	Experimental Field Study	60 juvenile offenders from Wisconsin. They ranged in age from 14 to 18 years. This was a *non probability* sample.	Television violence was not measured. Instead ten unedited commercial films were shown to the boys. Half the films were violent, the other half were non-violent. Aggressive behavior was measured by the same procedures in Leyens *et al.*	• Although differences in aggressive behavior were observed in the study, they can not be attributed to the movie content alone. The boys found the violent films to be more exciting, more likeable, less boring and not silly compared to the neutral films. To overcome this problem, the authors conducted a replication of the study with more interesting, non-violent films. No significant differences were reported for physical or interpersonal aggression in this study. In this second study the boys reported that both types of films were equally interesting and exciting. • Subjects were not randomly assigned to experimental conditions. Therefore initial differences may already have existed among the groups. Any observed differences can not be attributed to the film stimuli.
SINGER, J.L. & SINGER, D.G. *Television, Imagination and Aggression: A study of preschoolers play.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980.	Panel Field Study conducted during the course of 1 year	141 nursery school and kindergarten children in the New Haven area. This was a *non-probability* sample.	Television viewing logs were kept by parents. Aggressive behavior was measured by having observers rate on a 5 point scale the level of aggressiveness exhibited by each child. Examples of these behaviors included: seizing another's toy, knocking over blocks, tearing up a poster, or pushing another child.	• Mean differences in levels of aggressiveness were not observed over the year's span of this study. Children who had seen more television over the course of the study did not behave any differently after 1 year had elapsed. • Absolute levels of aggressive behavior were very low in this study. Girls rarely showed any aggression at all. • Serious forms of aggressive behavior did not occur. • While controls for SES, ethnic background and IQ were employed in this study, the small, non-representative sam-

STUDY	APPROACH	SUBJECTS	MEASUREMENT	EVALUATION
SINGER, J.L. & SINGER, D.G. *Television, imagination and aggression: A study of preschoolers play.* Hillsdale, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1980. (continued)				ple of middle class, white children did not allow enough variability in these measures to adequately conduct these tests. Other important third variables were not measured in this study. ● Cross lagged correlational procedures were used. These procedures have been demonstrated to be invalid for causal analysis. ● Initial levels of aggressiveness were not controlled in the analysis.
WILLIAMS, T.M. Differential impact of TV on children: A natural experiment in communities with and without TV. Paper presented at the meeting of the International Society for Research on Aggression, Washington, 1978.	Panel Field Study over 2 years	240 elementary school children in Canada. This was a *non probability sample.*	Television exposure was not measured, instead three towns were compared: (1) no television town; (2) one network town and (3) multi-network town. Aggressive behavior was measured by observation of verbal and physical behavior during free play at school; peer and teacher ratings of aggression.	● The study has not been subjected to peer review or published in a journal. This paper (5 pages in length) does not provide enough information to understand and evaluate exactly what the researchers did and what they found. Statistical tests are not reported. ● The sample is very small and comes from another country and culture. The programs they view are different from ours. ● The study design is weak because any differences observed among the towns could be due to a multitude of other factors besides television. Important third variables were not controlled. ● Only 44 children were studied at two points in time. Inferences from this small sample of longitudinal data can not be generalized.

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Prepared by the ABC Social Research Unit and the Broadcast Standards and Practices Department. All data contained herein are from the sources cited. Detailed information is available from the ABC Social Research Unit on request.

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Social Research Unit/ Broadcast Standards and Practices Department

Mr. **Hughes** [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Wurtzel.

Mr. Harding, we have your statement which, as I indicated previously, will be made a part of the record in full. You may proceed as you see fit.

Mr. **Harding**. Thank you.

My name is Philip Harding, and I am director, special projects research, in the CBS/Broadcast Group.

I would like to say at the outset that we at CBS appreciate the opportunity to present our views on the possible social consequences of crime and violence in the media. We are pleased that this hearing has been conceived not as adversarial in nature but as a more scholarly forum for the presentation of information and points of view on this complex question. To approach the topic in that way offers far greater promise of bringing into precise focus the specific issues involved.

Questions of this sort can be addressed at two levels. The first is the level of opinion, wherein we are spared the need to deal with facts. So long as debate is maintained at that level, each side's position is unassailable—and, of course, usually immune to change.

There is, however, a second level from which to examine and try to resolve such questions. At this level facts, by which I mean observable events and processes, are the very bedrock. And when such facts are insufficiently available, we say so and get on with the business of seeking them out through disciplined research inquiry.

Most of us, I suspect, would agree that the issue before us today, whether depictions of crime and violence on television are likely to produce crime and violence in real life, is more appropriately addressed at this second, scientific level.

It should be recognized that questions as to the relationship between media content and crime are by no means new. Half a century ago, the Payne Fund was supporting research on whether movies influenced their teenaged viewers to engage in criminal behavior. In the intervening years, comic books and even radio became focuses of similar inquiries. As regards television, CBS has been represented at some half-dozen House or Senate hearings since 1964, as well as at a hearing of the Eisenhower Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Indeed, only this past December, some 4 months ago, the NIMH report was the topic of a formal evaluation by the National Academy of Sciences, undertaken at the request of the National Institute of Justice, to assess the need for research into the possible contribution of television violence to crime.

So there is, then, a considerable history to the issues confronting us today. Television, like the earlier media which were the subject of similar concerns, does, of course, deal with crime and violence. But scientific discussion of the social consequences of such depictions must, I submit, be brief, because there are few facts to present.

Let me elaborate. In Volume 1 of the NIMH Report, the summary volume, the chapter coming closest to what we are discussing today is titled "Violence and Aggression" and refers, of course, to television violence and viewer aggression. The pertinent section of volume 2, the one composed of technical reviews of the research, is similarly titled, as are both of the two studies which have become the particular focus of critical discussion—the Huesmann and Milavsky studies.

The conclusions drawn by those studies and by the report relate primarily to "aggression." In short, the word which has been adopted for this discussion by the scientific community is "aggression" and not "violence." It is aggression and not violence that the great mass of the studies have sought to measure. The reason for this is a pragmatic one. As Krattenmaker and Powe observed several years ago in the Virginia Law Review—and here I am quoting:

> A normative definition of violence agreeable to all and fairly objectively determinable can be derived: The purposeful, illegal infliction of pain for personal gain or gratification that is intended to harm the victim and is accomplished in spite of social sanctions against it. Whether viewing such behavior simulated on television tends to cause its occurrence in real life seems to be the question about which researchers, regulators, and the public care. Such violence, however, is precisely the sort of behavior that no researcher in a laboratory may seek to cause, and that no "real world observer" can hope to witness systematically.

The fact that the NIMH Report and the underlying research bear on aggression rather than violence has been emphasized by us and by other observers who have questioned the social importance of the behaviors studied. Some critics of the research, including ourselves, go further and ask whether many of these behaviors are even "aggressive" in any destructive or hurtful sense.

By way of example, one of the studies has as its subjects nursery schoolchildren whose behavior was observed and rated during free-play periods. To the extent that this study turned up any behaviors its authors considered aggressive, these were limited very largely to instances in which a child may have carelessly knocked into other children's toys or disrupted games. Another study considers it aggressive for third-grade children to stick their tongues out and give people dirty looks. One of the witnesses here today, Dr. Thomas Cook, in a soon-to-be-published evaluation of the NIMH Report, has suggested that many of the aggression measures are not clearly related to my antisocial behavior. He notes:

> Many readers understand "aggression" in terms of physical violence with intent to harm or as criminal behavior and not as the "incivility" that the majority of past measures of aggression mostly tap into.

Now, I have no wish to review all the behaviors measured in all of the studies. But I think we can agree that while some of these behaviors do represent some form of aggression, we must always recognize that very few of them could be meaningfully characterized as violent.

And if so little of the available research has dealt with violence, still less has focused on real-life crime. In short, then, the types of behavior discussed in the NIMH Report and the research on which it is based simply do not afford the basis for a scholarly conclusion as to whether violence on television leads to crime or violence in the streets.

Let me close with a few general observations. While the causes of crime are complex, we may all agree that among the major contributing factors are a variety of deeply rooted social conditions. Those conditions, however, are notoriously difficult to eradicate. It, therefore, becomes all too easy to point the finger of blame elsewhere—frequently at the media, and particularly at television. CBS believes, however, that after years of hearings and official Government reports, there is still no convincing evidence that television violence creates criminals or increases crime in our society.

It, therefore, becomes all the more important that we not allow our concern about crime to lead us into actions inconsistent with the first amendment. Crime and violence appear in the media, both in the form of dramatic entertainment and in our daily newspapers and news broadcasts, for the simple reason that they are part of the world in which we live. It is difficult to imagine any role for the Government in this area which would not be fundamentally at odds with our traditions of free speech and a free press.

Those are issues, however, which can be better discussed by others. What I have tried to suggest to you today is that this is a terribly complex area, and we are still very far from understanding the facts concerning it.

Thank you.

[Mr. Harding's statement follows:]

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BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON CRIME OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY

Statement by Philip A. Harding

Director, Special Projects Research, CBS/Broadcast Group

April 13, 1983

My name is Philip Harding, and I am Director, Special Projects Research in the CBS/Broadcast Group.

I would like to say at the outset that we at CBS appreciate the opportunity to present our views on the possible social consequences of crime and violence in the media. We are pleased that this hearing has been conceived not as adversarial in nature but as a more scholarly forum for the presentation of information and points of view on this complex question. To approach the topic in that way offers far greater promise of bringing into precise focus the specific issues involved.

Questions of this sort can be addressed at two levels. The first is the level of opinion, wherein we are spared the need to deal with facts. So long as debate is maintained at that level, each side's position is unassailable -- and, of course, usually immune to change.

There is, however, a second level from which to examine and try to resolve such questions. At this level, facts -- by which I mean observable events and processes -- are the very bedrock. And when such facts are insufficiently available, we say so and get on with the business of seeking them out through disciplined research inquiry.

Most of us, I suspect, would agree that the issue before us today -- whether depictions of crime and violence on television are likely to produce crime and violence in real life -- is more appropriately addressed at this second, scientific level.

It should be recognized that questions as to the relationship between media content and crime are by no means new. Half a century ago, the Payne Fund was supporting research on whether movies influenced their teenaged viewers to engage in criminal behavior. In the intervening years, comic books and even radio became focuses of similar inquiries. As regards television, CBS has been represented at some half-dozen House or Senate hearings since 1964, as well as at a hearing of the Eisenhower Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence. Indeed, only this past December, four months ago, the NIMH report was the topic of a formal evaluation by the National Academy of Sciences, undertaken at the request of the National Institute of Justice, to assess the need for research into the possible contribution of television violence to crime.

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Let me elaborate. In Volume 1 of the NIMH report, the summary volume, the chapter coming closest to what we are discussing today is titled "Violence and Aggression" and refers of course to television violence and viewer aggression. The pertinent section of Volume 2, the one composed of technical reviews of the research, is similarly titled, as are both of the two studies which have become the particular focus of critical discussion -- the Huesmann and Milavsky studies. The conclusions drawn by those studies and by the report relate primarily to "aggression." In short, the word which has been adopted for this discussion by the scientific community is "aggression" and not "violence." And it is aggression, not violence, that the great mass of the studies have sought to measure. The reason for this is pragmatic. As Krattenmaker and Powe observed several years ago in the Virginia Law Review:

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The fact that the NIMH report, and the underlying research, bear on aggression rather than violence has been emphasized by us and by other observers who have questioned the social importance of the behaviors studied. Some critics of the research, including ourselves, go further and ask whether many of these behaviors are even "aggressive" in any destructive or hurtful sense. By way of example, one of the studies has as its subjects nursery-school children whose behavior was observed and rated during free-play periods. To the extent that this study turned up any behaviors its authors considered agressive, these were limited very largely to instances in which a child may have carelessly knocked into other children's toys or disrupted games. Another study considers it aggressive for third grade children to stick their tongues out and give people dirty looks. One of the witnesses here today, Dr. Thomas Cook, in a soon to be published evaluation of the NIMH report, has suggested that many of the aggression measures are not clearly related to any anti-social behavior. He notes that "[m]any readers understand 'aggression' in terms of physical violence with intent to harm or as criminal behavior and not as the 'incivility' that the majority of past measures of aggression mostly tap into."

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And if so little of the available research has dealt with violence, still less has focused on real-life crime. In short, then, the types of behavior discussed in the NIMH report and the research on which it is based simply do not afford the basis for a scholarly conclusion as to whether violence on television leads to crime or violence in the streets.

Let me close with a few general observations. While the causes of crime are complex, we may all agree that among the major contributing factors are a variety of deeply-rooted social conditions. Those conditions, however, are notoriously difficult to eradicate. It therefore becomes all too easy to point the finger of blame elsewhere -- frequently at the media and particularly at television. CBS believes, however, that after years of hearings and official government reports, there is still no convincing evidence that television violence creates criminals or increases crime in our society.

It therefore becomes all the more important that we not allow our concern about crime to lead us into actions inconsistent with the First Amendment. Crime and violence appear in the media -- both in the form of dramatic entertainment and in our daily newspapers and news broadcasts -- for the simple reason that they are part of the world in which we live. It is difficult to imagine any role for the government in this area which would not be fundamentally at odds with our traditions of free speech and a free press.

Those are issues, however, which can be better discussed by others. What I have tried to suggest to you today is that this is a terribly complex area, and we are still very far from understanding the facts concerning it.

Mr. HUGHES. Thank you very much, Mr. Harding.

First, would any of the panelists like to comment on any of the other statements made by panelists? You're pretty much all in accord with what has been said by each panelist?

Mr. HARDING. Yes.

Mr. HUGHES. Mr. Harding, in your statement you emphasize the distinction between aggression and violence. Professor Eron, in his research, seems to make a connection and seems to go even further and relate it to violent criminal acts.

What would your response be to his research?

Mr. HARDING. I have not seen that research. I have not seen any research which sought to extrapolate from measures of these more, I would say, harmless acts of aggression, to the more serious kinds of things that happen in later life.

I was interested in listening to that because I have never seen that kind of information in the research literature, and I certainly would want to look very closely at those relationships.

Mr. HUGHES. I am sure that Professor Eron would be very happy to make that data available.

In your closing statement you make the observation that "CBS believes, however, that after many years of hearings and official Government reports, there is still no convincing evidence that television violence creates criminals or increases crime in our society."

That sounds to me like a request for a "smoking gun" type of evidence, and I doubt that we will ever find that kind of evidence and I think you would agree with that. I am not so sure you could ever prove beyond a reasonable doubt since we just can't take a picture of a person's mind.

What, in your judgment, would be the kind of evidence that would be persuasive?

Mr. HARDING. To me, the most—and other people have said this—the most persuasive kind of study is the laboratory experiment done in the field under naturalistic conditions. I do not like the laboratory study that is done in the laboratory because so many of the conditions are controlled and it is simply unrealistic. So I think you start with that.

Some years——

Mr. HUGHES. Is CBS doing anything to acquire that kind of data?

Mr. HARDING. Yes. Several years ago, going back to 1969, I believe—and this was in response to the concerns about violence that had then come to the forefront in society—we convened a conference of social scientists to address this very question. In fact, in the context of that conference we solicited proposals for that very type of study.

We stipulated, however, that if we were to provide grant moneys for research in this field, there were a couple of ground rules that had to be observed. One was this kind of thing that I am talking about. The research had to be addressed to television violence which was observed under natural viewing conditions and not in the laboratory, and the behaviors in question had to be observed and measured in the real world and not in the laboratory. There were other things, but after a rather extensive peer review process, we did indeed fund certain studies which met those criteria on an unrestricted grant basis, which meant that CBS had no right of interposition—anything to say about the findings.

But that comes closest, I think, to the kinds of studies that we feel offer the most promise——

Mr. HUGHES. Were any such studies commissioned?

Mr. HARDING. Yes. There were three or four commissioned. I hesitate because CBS commissioned some by itself and others in connection with a committee, an industry committee, called the Joint Committee for Research on Television and Children.

Mr. HUGHES. Have those studies been completed?

Mr. HARDING. Yes, they were completed. The authors of one of them were Stanley Milgram and Lance Shotland, and that study is in the literature. Another one is the Belson study with which you may be familiar. A third was by Feshback and Singer, done in the late sixties, and a fourth was a replication of Feshback and Singer by Williams Wells.

These were essentially laboratory field experiments in the sense that they were laboratory designs applied to a field setting, where you have these kinds of naturalistic——

Mr. HUGHES. Those studies were taken into account by the NIMH?

Mr. HARDING. The NIMH report dealt with only those studies that came out, I think, since 1972 or so, so Feshback and Singer perhaps may not have fallen in that. But yes, they did refer to Belson and they do refer to the Milgram and Shotland research.

Mr. HUGHES. So you are saying, aside from the conclusions that might be arrived at in the field, no other studies done in the laboratory would be sufficient, no matter how conclusive the sociologists or the researchers were in their findings?

Mr. HARDING. It depends on the level at which you wish to observe these things. If you look at a laboratory study done in a laboratory, you can demonstrate that certain things can happen, it is possible for them to happen. It is possible to show a child a film of another child hitting a Bobo doll, for example. A child may learn from that film that one can hit a Bobo doll and that is, indeed, what Bobo dolls are for.

But, on the other hand, I don't think you can be satisfied with that. As I say, both the stimulus for the aggression and the aggression itself were so contrived that, I would not be satisfied with making basic social policy or any other kind of decisions based on that kind of——

Mr. **Hughes**. Some of the studies I am aware of, the study by Professor Cook and certainly by Professor Eron, a lot of that work was done in the field, was it not?

Mr. **Harding**. Yes, Professor Eron's was done in the field.

Mr. **Hughes**. How would you distinguish between those studies and the studies you envision?

I mean, obviously, the data was collected, and I gather you have no quarrel with the techniques that were used by these sociologists and scientists.

Mr. **Harding**. My quarrel is twofold: one, as I indicated in the statement, is with the nature of the dependent variable, the criterion variable, what is called aggression in these studies. That is one thing that I do take issue with, I haven't seen Professor Eron's most recent work, but I would be terribly interested in any study which related aggression at one time, or television viewing many years before, to aggression at a much later time. But I will reserve judgment on that. I just haven't seen it.

The other concern I have is with the analysis techniques. What we are dealing with here is essentially correlational data, the kind of thing Dr. Wurtzel was talking about. We can never truly measure cause and effect, I don't believe, except in a laboratory kind of situation. Professors Eron's and Heusmann's work, since it used multiple regression analysis to arrive at its conclusions, must therefore have relied on correlational analysis rather than analyses which permit causal inference. Those are the two objections I have.

Mr. **Sawyer**. Would the chairman yield for a minute?

Mr. **Hughes**. I would be happy to yield.

Mr. **Sawyer**. I don't like to interrupt, but I have a question. I meant to ask the prior panel about this but then I got diverted and missed the opportunity.

I am puzzled by what is meant by the word "aggression." You know, aggression isn't necessarily bad. I hear parents complain that their child isn't aggressive enough. It depends on what you mean. What do you mean by aggression? Everybody is using that word and I'm not quite clear on what you mean. Do you mean punching somebody in the nose or being a little pushy to get ahead?

Mr. **Hughes**. That was the point of part of the testimony.

Mr. **Sawyer**. Oh. I missed it, unfortuantely.

Dr. **Wurtzel**. That is one of the key issues in terms of this entire question; that is, many of the measures that are being used such as aggression are never really well defined, vary tremendously from study to study, and, in fact, can be as abstract as asking a child if he would be interested in seeing a balloon pricked with a pin. Yet those are assumed to be aggressive and, even beyond that, violent behavior.

Similarly, there are very frequently inconsistencies in the way in which violence is defined. Of course, what all these studies attempt to do is to get a menu of programs which the researcher claims to be violent, see whether the child watched that show, and then see if there is an association with whatever measure of aggression the researcher happens to be using.

Mr. SAWYER. I suppose that the average kid in high school going out for the wrestling team is probably basically aggressive, and maybe the same thing for a football player. That's why I was having trouble in trying to distinguish——

Mr. HUGHES. Professor Eron's study, which I think has to give you some difficulty, perhaps would fly in the face of your suggestion that the definition of aggression really is a little ambiguous and therefore it challenges the results. Professor Eron was much more specific. He was talking about acts of violence. His study dealt with criminal activity, drunken driving and other activities. So that study was much more specific than the other studies.

What do you have to say about his study? Do you challenge the methodology that he used.

Mr. HARDING. If I understand the study that you're talking about, when it was first done it measured aggression at the age of 9. Then they went back 10 years later and measured it at the age of 19. I think it was 1 year after graduation from high school.

It is my understanding that the methodology was a little peculiar because they had measured aggression at the earlier age and then they went back and talked to as many of these same subjects as they could find. But instead of asking about these people's aggression at their present age, they tried to find out who "used to be," whatever the aggression variable was. Who used to be. So you had no way of interpreting what point in time the answer referred to.

If I am thinking of the same study, it was who used to be doing these things. You had no sense of what time the respondent had in mind when he answered the question. So you don't truly have a measure of aggression at time one and a measure of aggression at time two. The second is a measure of the subject's aggression somewhere in between the ages of 9 and 19. It is not clear exactly when. It is simply methodologically flawed on that basis.

Mr. HUGHES. How else could you accomplish that, if you did not look at it at different periods?

Mr. HARDING. You would want to get—I suspect if your objective is to measure the effect of television on aggression at time one and at a later time, you would want to measure the aggression as it actually exists at that later time. In other words, get some kind of aggression description of the individual at the second point in time, which is exactly what they failed to do, as I understand it.

Mr. HUGHES. How would you do that unless you were at the scene of the act of violence? Obviously you have got to pick some arbitrary period of time and determine at that point what type of behavior took place in the intervening years.

Mr. **Harding**. Exactly. I don't think the idea was to do it for the intervening years. But I think it was to measure aggression at that second time, at age——

Mr. **Hughes**. OK. But to try to get it at the exact time, that an act of aggression or an act of violence took place, would be most difficult.

Dr. Milavsky.

Dr. **Milavsky**. I would just like to add to that. I think both Professors Eron and Phil Harding are right on this, in different ways. As I understand it, from having read Professor Eron's longer statement—he excerpted from that this morning—he has got another measurement 10 years after the one that Phil knows about—and Phil would not have any way of knowing about it, not having read the later statement. In that he does have measures of serious criminal behavior. He reports, although we haven't seen the data, that there is a little bit of a relationship between that measure that they took when the children were in the third grade and this measure 20 years later.

Mr. **Hughes**. Well, there is enough of a conclusion to that effect that he concludes there is a causal relationship.

Dr. **Milavsky**. Yes, but what we have not seen—and he doesn't say that he did that in his extended statement, either—but we have not seen yet the relationship between the earlier television exposure measure and that later behavior. He has got that data but we have not seen that yet, nor has he talked about it.

Mr. **Hughes**. Have you requested that, Dr. Milavsky?

Dr. **Milavsky**. No. He is not here in the room. As a matter of fact, during the intermission I was going to ask him——

Mr. **Hughes**. I can't imagine that that would not be available upon request.

Dr. **Milavsky**. No, no. I am not saying that he is hiding anything.

Mr. **Hughes**. Well, here we have obviously four very respected scientists, I am sure nobody quarrels with their credentials there. They are very reputable and they have no reason whatsoever to color their testimony or their conclusions. They have done exhaustive studies and independently they have come to the same essential conclusion.

Is it possible that your conclusions are wrong?

Dr. **Milavsky**. I don't think so. I think it is possible that their conclusions are wrong.

Mr. **Hughes**. I expected you to say that.

Mr. **Harding**. No, I think it is true that, as I said before, a lot depends on the level at which you are willing to accept data of this kind.

Mr. **Hughes**. You see, I have the impression that television has arrived at this conclusion, and "don't confuse me with facts; my mind is made up." That's the impression I get.

Dr. **Milavsky**. I would like to comment on that. I think we should be very clear, at least as far as NBC is concerned—and I think this feeling is shared by the other networks—that we are discussing some very complicated sets of evidence on the issue of long-term effects here. Most of the discussion today was on that subjec

As far as imitation is concerned, we are not even—as far as we're concerned, we are not arguing the point. We are not even looking for data on that subject any more. We are looking at our programs and saying let's not get into that. Any program cannot possibly have anything in it that might lead to the harmful imitation of acts by even a deranged person, insofar as that can be humanly foreseen by human beings looking at these things and making judgments. So that is not an issue here. I don't want you to get the impression that we are stonewalling and we are acting as though we can show anything we want to on television. We do not take that kind of position.

Mr. HUGHES. I appreciate that, and I appreciate your candor. I think that is a very responsible approach and I am delighted to learn that that is the policy of the networks.

You know, Dr. Wurtzel, I was a little intrigued by your use of the survey that was completed with some 400 researchers by Bybee. As I understand it, you asked 400 researchers whether they believed violence on television was "the cause"—and I emphasize that—of aggressive behavior.

Now, "the cause" is sort of all-inclusive, isn't it?

Dr. WURTZEL. Congressman, this is——

Mr. HUGHES. That's like to the exclusion of everything else.

Dr. WURTZEL. We did not conduct that study. This is a study that was conducted by Bybee, Robinson, and Turow.

Mr. HUGHES. I'm not quarreling with the study. I am quarreling with your testimony. You lead us to believe that the study found that 400 researchers concluded that there was no causal relationship by the questions that were asked. The one question that you point to as showing a de minimus response—I think 0.8 of 1 percent, which is de minimus—was the question of whether it was "the cause." I mean, that is to the exclusion of all other causes.

Now, do you think that is a fair representation of that survey?

Dr. WURTZEL. I think it is a fair representation on a number of levels. First of all, I think we have to recognize that 18 areas of interest in terms of the academic community were questioned to these 400 researchers, and in terms of interest and importance, violence or television and aggression came up 13th. So it clearly is not on the minds of many, many of the researchers who are working in the field. There is something of significant importance, for a number of reasons.

Second, I think the point we are trying to bring out here is that the NIMH came out with an awfully significant global statement suggesting that there is a cause-effect relationship between television and behavior and that there is a consensus within the scientific community that this has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt.

First of all, that survey indicates that that is not, indeed, the case, and secondly——

Mr. HUGHES. Let me just stop you there. There was more than one question asked. You came in here and you testified about one question, "the cause" question.

How about the response when the survey asked these scholars their perception of whether aggressive behavior was an important cause?

Dr. **Wurtzel.** Yes, and then some 20 percent suggested that that was the case.

Mr. **Hughes.** 21.2 percent.

How about a "somewhat important cause"?

Dr. **Wurtzel.** Forty-three percent.

Mr. **Hughes.** 43.8 percent. Then there was a total of 65 percent. I would consider that a pretty significant number of those 400 researchers, wouldn't you?

Dr. **Wurtzel.** I am not suggesting that this study is in any way definitive. First of all, from a survey methodological standpoint, the questions are skewed toward one end. In other words, we don't see a question here that says "a somewhat unimportant cause." So, No. 1, there were certain methodological problems in the questions.

I am using this as an illustration of the fact—and I think this addresses a comment that you asked a moment earlier—and that is, how can we have four distinguished social scientists up here on the panel previously and they all come out with these statements reflecting such different viewpoints? It seems as though—again, as the NIMH suggests—the academic scientific community simply feels that the book has been closed on this case. That is not, indeed, the case, not at all. In fact, there is a very, very vigorous debate within the scientific community. I think you saw some of it this morning when you saw Professor Eron talking about the way in which he interprets the data and when you see Dr. Milavsky and his colleagues talk about the way in which data is interpreted. And when you also discussed the fact that there has been no consistent definition of the very thing that we are being asked to measure.

In fact, Krattenmaker and Powe, who wrote an article in the Virginia Law Review, which Mr. Harding mentioned earlier, indicated that it is not so much that we haven't been able to answer this question about the effects of television on violent behavior. The social science community hasn't even asked that question. So what I am trying to suggest is that there is a great deal of debate and that by no means is the conclusion of a causal relationship one that reflects the entire research community.

Mr. **Hughes.** Let me just tell you as a lay person—I am not a scientist, I'm not a sociologist; I'm the guy who has four kids who watch TV. Television is a dynamite media. I mean, to try to convince our kids they don't need Captain Crunch, for instance, was a tremendous job. And around Christmastime, you guys had us going bananas with new toys on TV. We encouraged them to stay away from the television around Christmastime because their desires change by the hour, depending upon what commercial they were seeing. People are so influenced by TV. It is probably the most dynamic media, and you do have a short time to get a message across, and it has to be a very important message, and I understand the constraints involved.

But having said that, having said I am not a scientist, I am persuaded that there is a relationship as the NIMH report indicates. I can't see how you would disagree. Obviously you have modified your policy somewhat. There is a relationship. The question is to what degree. What is the contribution? Where, in this complex series of influences that goes into shaping an individual, does TV fit in that overall complex situation? That is perhaps the question.

I can't believe that anybody would come in here and say that the violence on TV doesn't have an impact. You can bring all the scientific studies in the world in, but I can tell you I would have a hard time believing that because just common sense tells me that if, in fact, it has that profound an impact on my kids on commercials, it has got to have an impact on violence. Kids are great mimickers. They become very impressionable at the ages of 5, 6, 7, and they try to mimmick the things that they think are in the real world and are important to their peer groups.

I remember one of the cases I tried as a prosecutor was a case where a guy shot his wife because she turned off "Hogan's Heroes." He shot her. It is not scientific what I'm going to tell you, but there were a number of instances of violence that followed that, where a spouse fooled around with the TV set. Copycat type of offenses. In my little community I saw it. The copycat type of personality is after all, all kinds of things. Perhaps the publicity, trying to get their name in the paper. Who can comprehend and fathom, really, all the motives.

The point is, they are influenced by things that they see around them, and TV is that pervasive, TV is a day in and day out influence and makes suggestions of normal behavior that I think gives all of us concern.

I am just delighted to hear that the media is looking at this, that there are ongoing studies, and policies are being modified. I think you fellows are being overly humble today in submitting to us that TV does not have a large influence on the American public. It's a profound influence.

Mr. HARDING. Mr. Chairman, I just want to say something. You were talking about the impact, the social impact of these violent portrayals.

The three of us are researchers and have been looking for many years at this issue. The body of research has simply not demonstrated a causal relationship between viewing of television violence and the more serious kinds of things with which your committee is concerned, crime, and the serious forms of violence. In all candor, I just have not seen that demonstrated in the research. That may be a fault of the research. It may be that that effect could be out there. But given the state of the art of the research methodology developed to this point, given what that research shows, I don't——

Mr. HUGHES. How do you explain away the copycat offenses, the skyjackings?

Mr. HARDING. I think you have a certain level of pathology out there, and these are people who would get the idea from television or from motion pictures, or from books, or from newspapers. It happened to be television in one case and it happened to be something else in another. But something triggered that for them.

Mr. HUGHES. Most of those people don't read books and newspapers, many of them don't. They do watch television in many cases.

Mr. HARDING. But I wonder what you do. Even if you say that, that it came from television, what do you do—I mean, if you're a programmer—because you cannot foresee what is going to set one of these people off. Some of it just makes no sense at all, and yet they react to it. It can be purely prosocial programming. It could be "Romeo and Juliet."

Mr. Hughes. I agree. You can never prevent it entirely. All you can do is endeavor to develop a reasonable set of guidelines and policies, where the industry polices itself as part of its responsibility to the public good, recognizing the tremendous power you have. That's all we ask.

I have taken much more time than I should have. I am going to recognize the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. Sawyer. Thank you. I just want to make an observation.

I think it is a question of degree, the degree of influence and on how many people, and the degree of alteration or deprivation of the rest of the public of the programs that they feel are worthwhile.

Obviously, some people grossly misuse an automobile, and I don't think you could say, therefore, none of the rest of us ought to have automobiles or the same thing with guns or whatever. So I think you have got to balance the amount of the restriction against the credit, or the good, or the entertainment, if you will, to balance it the other way.

It doesn't personally appeal to me that I can't watch a program because 1 person out of 10 million out there might be impacted by it, rightly or wrongly, to do some nutty thing, sometimes, as you say, with no relationship to the programs.

I am very persuaded that the news media coverage is an inducement to certain deranged people to do deranged things. I have investigated that to my own satisfaction, even in hearings with the people that did it. You can almost see that same pattern with Hinckley. He wanted to use the media to prove to this gal Foster, whoever it was, that he was some kind of a big figure. Lee Harvey Oswald, I know from our own assassination hearings, it really wasn't that he didn't like Kennedy or that he had anyting against anybody. He really was just one of these frustrated people who couldn't get any recognition. He tried distributing Cuban literature. He got arrested, but no publicity. He defected from the United States and went to the Soviet Union after serving in the Marine Corps, and he didn't get—other than being put on a watch list or two, nobody paid any attention to him. I think finally, just out of some sort of twisted drive to get recognition, he ended up killing the President of the United States.

It really beats me how you overcome that. But you do have to recognize it, even outside of criminal areas. I know some outside of the criminal areas who view any publicity as good publicity. Whether it is good or bad, I would say the average one of us would shrink from any unfavorable publicity and would much rather prefer none, but that doesn't go across the board. A number of public figures around the country are perfectly willing to do outrageous things, just because they view any publicity as good publicity. Of course, then you get the demented variety or twisted variety and that becomes an object in and of itself.

I guess, other than hoping for normal restraint and good judgment, at least attempts to prevail in the news portrayals, and in the programming, balancing good against the potential is about really all you can expect, in my judgment. Until we get the public to where they don't want to watch the notorious or this and that—which occasionally they have reacted to, and very effectively, on programming and that sort of thing, where the complaints are enough from the public that the media responds. But I guess, unfortunately, the thing that makes news is racial accusations in Chicago and mental insanity accusations and the things we saw with a Vice Presidential nominee here a few campaigns back, where it developed he had some kind of a mental institution background. Those kinds of things, I guess the media does them because unfortunately, the rest of us tolerate them and seem to want to listen to them.

I know the chairman and I and our subcommittee are very concerned with drugs here as one of our major things, and I suppose, other than holding it down as best we can, you are never going to cure it until the market goes away, until people don't want it. I guess we have all proved that with prostitution for as long as memory goes.

So I suppose the problem, as somebody here made an observation, that the problem is kind of with the bad news selection or the things that make news, I guess a part of the problem is with ourselves in general, although I do think the media's selectivity of what makes news on the news side of the thing also promotes people to doing outrageous things to get some news recognition when they think it is valuable to them.

But I just think we have restrained pretty well, as near as I know, all programs depicting crime, where we always end up with the criminal being found wrong and punished and the good always prevails—unfortunately, maybe more so than in real life. But other than doing that kind of thing, it is hard to say how you stop the entertainment.

One other thing I wanted to observe——

Mr. **Hughes**. If the gentleman would yield to me first, I wonder if the gentleman would conclude this hearing. I have to go to the capitol.

I just want to thank the panel for their testimony. It has been very helpful. I know you came a long distance, from an ongoing convention in Las Vegas, and we really appreciate your coming in today. Thank you.

Mr. **Sawyer** [presiding]. Just one more observation.

On these crime statistics that are used, we have been holding hearings on that. First of all, there is kind of a shocking fact that only about one-third of all crimes are reported to the police, so that statistically you have got a tremendous margin of error in there. When only a third of them are reported, it is hard to even perceive fluctuations up and down when such a big bulk of them aren't reported.

They have also found that when an anticrime drive is undertaken in an area by the police or other forces, the amount of reported crime goes way up, and not necessarily because there is any more crime because they are cracking down on it, but because the public is made more aware and more conscientious about reporting it. So it appears to have a totally reverse effect when they have big law enforcement crackdowns.

You know, I spent some time as a prosecutor in an urban area. It was kind of shocking to see how distorted these crime figures potentially are when we used to pay a lot of attention to them. They are almost counterproductive when you get crackdowns, in that almost axiomatically pushes up the amount of reported crime in the area you are cracking down in. With only a third of them going reported—and that is not just crimes like rape, which you can figure there may be understandable reasons for that—but all serious crimes, they say a total like two-thirds are not reported. So I just think you are dealing in an area that is hard to get your teeth into, and then you are coping with the problem of trying to decide when a kid watched a television program when he was 7 years old, what impact does that have on his pulling an armed robbery when he is 17.

I am not a researcher, but I would look askance at you if you were very positive about the conclusions, one way or the other—and I don't draw any particular conclusions. But I would fret about the research methodology if somebody was very satisfied with the fact that watching a couple of awful violent films at age 7 resulted in an armed robbery or a murder at age 17.

Well, I want to express the chairman's appreciation for your coming, and I appreciate it, too. Thank you very much.

We will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:20 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

BOYS TOWN,
Boys Town, NE, October 24, 1983.

Hon. WILLIAM J. HUGHES,
Chairman, Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. HUGHES: I am writing to express my interest in two issues which are likely to be considered by your Subcommittee in forthcoming hearings: The Impact of Television Violence and the Reauthorization of the JJDP Act.

In this regard, I am enclosing two recent reports from Boys Town that might be of interest to members of your Subcommittee: *Television & Youth: 25 Years of Research and Controversy and Status Offenders: A Sourcebook.* Also, I have appended a copy of a recent speech on television violence.

Thank you for your continuing interest in these issues. Please let me know if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN P. MURRAY, Ph.D.,
Director, Youth & Family Policy.

Enclosures.

VIOLENCE DONE TO TV VIOLENCE RESEARCH: A RESPONSE TO THE CRITICS

(John P. Murray, the Boys Town Center)

The history of research on the topic of television's impact on children is largely the history of research on the impact of televised violence. Indeed, almost 1,000 of the more than 3,000 reports published during the past 30 years have been addressed to the violence issue.

Clearly, we know much more about television's impact now than we did 30 years ago, but the controversies surrounding televised violence are as prominent and pervasive in 1983 as they were in 1953.

Recently, several organizations such as the National Institute of Mental Health and the Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry have undertaken scholarly reviews of the impact of television (see, Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982; Group for the Advancement of Psychiatry, 1982) but a great deal of criticism has been leveled at these and other reports which draw conclusions about the impact of televised violence (e.g., American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., 1983).

The critics worry that scientists have not amassed sufficient evidence to support the claim that viewing televised violence can lead to aggressive behavior in children and adolescents who view such programming. Those who doubt the validity of this conclusion—and largely have been responsible for much of the "violence done to TV violence research"—have voiced seven main criticisms:

1. Studies which show that TV violence can cause aggressive behavior are laboratory experiments which bear little resemblence to real life;
2. Studies dealing with real-life experiences which show a relationship between violence viewing and aggressive behavior are only correlational and are not relavant to issues of cause and effect;
3. All research results may be dismissed because no individual study is perfect in all respects;
4. There are many ways of defining "television violence" and "aggression" and the results of studies using various definitions cannot be compared;
5. The "convergence" of research findings showing that TV violence causes aggression is questionable because the empirical methods used are similar in many studies;

6. Similary, the "convergence" of researcher opinion about the impact of TV violence is questionable bacause these researchers share a common empirical approach to the study of these issues; and, finally,

7. We should not waste time studying the harmful effects of televised violence because if we found such harmful effects, we would not know what remedial action should be taken.

I would like to respond to some of this violence-done-to-TV-violence research because I believe that these criticisms are ill-conceived, occasionally self-serving, and frequently wrong-headed.

The first contention that the causal link between violence viewing and aggressive behavior is limited to laboratory based experimental studies is simply not true. In addition to laboratory studies, there are field experiments, and longitudinal/panel studies which support the notion that there are some long-term, cumulative effects of viewing violence on aggressive behavior (see, Berkowitz, 1983; Murray, 1980). Even the highly touted NBC study by Ronald Milavsky and his colleagues (Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, & Rubens, 1982) which claims to find "no effect" does in fact demonstrate a small but important causal influence. Furthermore, Thomas Cook and his associates have pointed out that these causal effects in the NBC study appear to become stronger over longer periods of time (see, Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983). And, this causal influence of violence viewing on aggressive behavior is even more clearly demonstrated in longitudinal studies of American, Australian and Finnish school-age youngsters conducted by Leonard Eron and his colleagues (Eron, 1982; Huesmann, Langerspetz, & Eron, in press; Sheehan, 1983). So, I believe that we do have evidence—from more than laboratory studies—that TV violence can cause aggression.

The second proposition that correlational studies are meaningless for discussions of causality, is simply without merit. While it is true that standard correlational studies of, for example, the amount of television viewing and ratings of aggressive behavior do not tell us which is cause and which is effect; still, these studies provide evidence of an ecologically valid link between violence viewing and aggressive behavior. From these studies we know that these two events, TV violence and aggression, co-relate or go together in the real world and the results from experimental studies clarify the process by which this real world relationship is formed.

In addition to this central role of correlational studies supporting the causal findings from experimental research, there are forms of correlational studies which themselves lend credence to a causal interpretation. Indeed, recent correlational studies are far more impressive in their demonstration of causal processes. For example, William Belson's (1978) study, conducted for CBS, found a causal-correlational relationship between long-term violence viewing and real-life aggressive behavior in teenage boys.

But, perhaps more impressive are the recent studies showing a relationship between media violence and indicators of societal violence conducted by David Phillips at the University of California, San Diego (1983; 1982; 1980; 1979; 1978; 1977). In these studies, Phillips demonstrates clear causal-inference relationships between assaults and deaths portrayed on television in such varied fare as boxing matches and soap operas, and the unexpected but significant increases in suicides and homocides in the American public. For example, in the case of boxing matches, the rate of homocide clearly increased following mass media reports on the match and, more important, the victims of the homocidal attacks were likely to be similar in age and race to the loser of the boxing match (Phillips, 1983).

It seems clear to me that correlational studies can help us to understand the ways in which televised violence may cause aggressive behavior.

The third contention that individual studies are not perfect is, of course, self-evident. But, it does not follow that minor imperfections—which are randomly distributed and not systematic in these studies—are grounds for dismissing this vast body of conclusive evidence.

The fourth, oft-repeated criticism is that there are many ways of defining the terms "television violence" and "aggression" and, therefore, it is impossible to generalize from these various individual studies. I believe that this criticism is faulty on two grounds: First, while there is some variation in the definitions of TV violence and aggressive behavior across studies, there is in fact only a limited range of variation in these definitions; and second, to the extent that there is variation in approach and definition from one study to another, this should be seen as a strenght rather than a weakness of the vast body of accumulated research. Thus, this fourth criticism of TV violence research in fact points out the strength and vit[illegible] this body of scientific evidence and enhances our ability to generalize the re[illegible]rived from various research projects.

The fifth criticism suggests that the "convergence" of research findings is not relevant to our understanding of the impact of televised violence because many of the researchers use similar scientific methods in conducting their research. I believe that to accept such a proposition is to deny the existence of culture, of scientific methods, indeed of human thought and experience. We come to understand the world and to function as organized societies through the growth of knowledge based upon shared, cumulative observations. If one observation or experience is felt to be unrelated to the next, if one finding contradicts another, if we cannot reflect upon individual inquiries and find some general theme or coherence, then there is no meaning to research and scholarly investigations. Fortunately, despite the critics' nihilistic approach to the validity of empirical studies of televised violence, I believe that there are some clear themes, that there is a covergence of evidence, and that the results of meta-analyses as well as informed reviews show that television violence can influence the attitudes, values, and behavior of viewers (see, Berkowitz, 1983; Cook, Kendzierski, & Thomas, 1983; Hearold, 1979; Murray, 1980; Murray & Kippax, 1979; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982; Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior, 1972).

The sixth, and somewhat related attack is the suggestion that the convergence of researchers' informed opinion on the impact of TV violence is worthless because these researchers share a common frame of reference. I agree that there is a certain amount of risk in accepting the weight of professional opinion on research findings if these researchers are all from a narrowly-defined discipline of science. However, recent studies have shown that a broad base of social scientists and communication professionals do agree that TV violence is causally related to aggressive behavior in children. For example, a survey of 468 widely divergent communication professionals (Bybee, Robinson, & Turow, 1982) and another study of and 109 psychologists, sociologists, and communication researchers (Murray, 1983) show that the overwhelming professional opinion is that television violence is one of the factors involved in producing aggressive behavior. As can be seen in Table 1, the strength of these professional opinions varies according to the field of academic specialization. But, by and large, these results suggest that knowledgeable and reasonable scientists, drawn from differing fields and research perspectives, do agree that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch such programs.

TABLE 1.—DEGREE OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRINCIPAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE NIMH REPORT CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF TELEVISED VIOLENCE ON CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS [1]

	Professional membership [2]				
	APA	ASA	ICA	NPA	Total
Number in sample	43	10	21	35	109
Number responding	31	5	13	19	68
Response rate (percent)	72	50	62	54	62
Type of response (number):					
Strongly agree	24	1	10	12	47
Moderately agree	4		1	4	9
Strongly disagree	1	3	1	1	6
Moderately disagree	1			1	2
No opinion					
Unable to decide	1	1	1	1	4
Percent agreement on the impact of TV violence	90	20	85	84	82

[1] The statement in question is one of the principal conclusions contained in a recent report from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): "the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for the effect."

[2] The total sample of 109 included 43 psychologists (APA), 10 sociologists (ASA), 21 communication researchers (ICA), and 35 professionals (NPA) who were not affiliated with one of these associations.

The seventh and final criticism suggests that we should not waste time studying the harmful effects of television violence because if we found such harmful effects we would not know what remedial action should be taken. This ostrich-like approach to the study of social issues—bury your head in the computer printouts and hope that the problem goes away—is not only misinformed but patently absurd. I agree that it is rare to find an individual research project, or even an entire program of research, in which the "identificaton" of a social issue is conjoined with strategies for "solving" the problem. But, once again, I see this as a strength rather than a weakness of research on TV violence. I think that we need different strategies and, perhaps, different disciplines to address the task of problem identification versus problem resolution. Fortunately, the TV violence research area has benefited from the contributions of a broad spectrum of social scientists. Exploring the dimensions of this social issue has required the efforts of hundreds of investigators over the past 30 years. Many of the problems identified are endemic to the structures of our society or television industry and will not submit to any easy solutions. However, this is not a reason for refusing to confront the issues and to embark on scholarly inquires. Research should inform public opinion and public policy, not the reverse. In the case of television and violence, I believe that we have accumulated a large number of studies which will help us to sort out some immediate and long-term options for social change.

The immediate options for parents in dealing with their children are clear. Parents should be concerned about that what their children see on television and take an active interest in their children's program choices (Murray & Lonnborg, 1982).

The long-term strategies for dealing with the structure of the television industry are more difficult, but I believe that these structural problems will yield to thoughful solutions if we can harness the interests of the creative and scholarly communities. In any event, denying the existence of problems concerning the impact of TV violence would be more harmful to both science and society than is the impact of TV violence itself.

In summary, I believe that we can reach a consensus—indeed we have reached a consensus—about the impact of televised violence. I, along with more than 40 other colleagues who have conducted research on children and television—listed in Table 2—have strongly and publicy supported the consensus statement on television violence contained in the most recent NIMH report.

TABLE 2.—*A List of 44 Social Scientists Who Strongly Endorsed the NIMH Report's Conclusions on TV Violence* [1]

Daniel R. Anderson, University of Massachusetts.
Charles Atkin, Michigan State University.
Leonard Berkowitz, University of Wisconsin.
Toni A. Campbell, Humboldt State University.
Steven H. Chaffee, Stanford University.
W. Andrew Collins, University of Minnesota.
Leonard D. Eron, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Barbara N. Flagg, Harvard University.
Lynette K. Friendrich-Cofer, University of North Carolina.
Douglas A. Fuchs, Los Angeles.
George Gerbner, University of Pennsylvania.
Marvin E. Goldberg, McGill University.
Patricia Greenfield, University of California, Los Angeles.
Bradley Greenberg, Michigan State University.
Larry Gross, University of Pennsylvania.
Randall P. Harrison, San Francisco State University.
Donald S. Hayes, University of Maine.
Kenneth W. Hirsch, California State University.
L. Rowell Huesmann, University of Illinois at Chicago.
Aletha C. Huston, University of Kansas.
Suzanne B. Kelly, University of Maine.
Felipe Korzenny, Michigan State University.
Stephen R. Levin, Kent State University.
Robert M. Liebert, State University of New York, Stony Brook.
James Lull, University of California, Santa Barbara.
Eleanor E. Maccoby, Stanford University.
Neil M. Malamuth, University of California, Los Angeles.
Michael Morgan, University of Pennsylvania.
John P. Murray, The Boys Town Center.
Edward L. Palmer, Davidson College.

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[1] These scientists publically endorsed the NIMH conclusions on TV violence in a letter to the editor of the APA Monitor.

David Pearl, National Institute of Mental Health.
Kathy Pezdek, Claremont Graduate School.
Suzanne Pingree, University of Wisconsin.
Richard Potts, University of Kansas.
Mable Rice, University of Kansas.
Donald F. Roberts, Stanford University.
Eli A. Rubinstein, University of North Carolina.
Nancy Signorielli, University of Pennsylvania.
Dorthy G. Singer, University of Bridgeport.
Jerome L. Singer, Yale University.
Ronald G. Slaby, Harvard University.
Bruce Watkins, University of Michigan.
Tannis MacBeth Williams, University of British Columbia.
John C. Wright, University of Kansas.

We believe that the most reasonable summary of our knowledge is that: ". . . violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiements and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for that effect." (p. 6, National Institute of Mental Health, Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties, 1982.)

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[From the New York Times, July 31, 1983]

The Networks Shrug Off Violence

(By John Corry)

Granted that the television networks are an easy target, that violence has many causes, and that when it first was argued that television contributed to the rise in violence the argument was made more from instinct than from data. Grant all these things; it is still depressing when the networks now insist that a viewer who has seen, say, 18,000 simulated murders by the time he is 17 has not had his psyche altered.

A recent report from NBC, packaged as a 505-page hardcover book finds no evidence that television is "causally implicated in the development of aggressive behavior patterns among children and adolescents." The conclusion, in fact, is the last sentence in the book, most of it written in the language of social science, and most of it incomprehensible to lay readers. It is likely, however, that the conclusion will be quoted again and again in what is now a ritualized argument—the networks on one side, almost everyone else on the other.

Still, there is a difference in the argument now; the networks, once conciliatory, now seem implacable. They are enlisting their own social and behavioral scientists to make their case.

The argument over television and violence seemed to be moving toward a resolution in 1969, when the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence found that watching violent programs made it more likely that a viewer would behave violently. It seemed to be settled in 1972, when the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior reached a "tentative conclusion of a causal relationship" between television violence and aggressive behavior.

In fact, the Surgeon General's committee had worded its conclusion so cautiously it nearly lost it. The television industry had veto power, which it exercised, over appointments to the committee. In addition, NBC and CBS employees were members of the committee. The committee's report was scarcely an attempt to indict the television industry, and in the Congressional hearings that followed its release there seemed to be good feelings and understanding all around.

"Now that we are reasonably certain that televised violence can increase aggressive tendencies in some children," Elton H. Rule, the president of ABC, said, "we will have to manage our program planning accordingly."

Nonetheless, not much seemed to change. Violence remained a staple. Then, in 1975, Congress prodded the Federal Communications Commission, and the F.C.C. prodded the networks. What emerged was an informal policy called the "family viewing hours." In theory, the networks would refrain from showing violence, or at least excessive violence, before the kids were put to bed. Whether television violence really did decline when the policy was in effect is arguable. Many people have suggested, however, that if violence did go out, sex came in to replace it. The middle and late 70's brought jiggle, innuendo, and soap. "Baretta" may have folded. "Three's Company" and "Charlie's Angels" picked up the slack.

Meanwhile, in the years after the Surgeon General's report, the amount of research on television increased enormously. A 1980 bibliography of television research lists some 300 titles published before 1970, and some 2,500 titles published after that. Last year, the National Institute of Mental Health, summarizing the studies, reported that "the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs."

The National Institute of Mental Health also reported some "consistent results" in the studies: "People who are heavy viewers of television are more apt to think the world is violent than are light viewers. They also trust other people less and believe that the world is a 'mean and scary' place."

In other words, the conclusions that a few researchers reached in the late 60's were upheld by many more researchers in the 70's and early 80's. The argument, one supposed, was now closed.

It was not, of course; it seems to be starting from scratch again. ABC, which was complaisant about the Surgeon General's report in 1972, recently put out a glossy booklet entitled "A Research Perspective on Television and Violence." It said that "after more than 30 years of scientific investigation, the issue of television violence remains open to debate."

Meanwhile, the director of research for CBS said in Congressional hearings in April that there is "still no convincing evidence" that television violence contributed to crime. At the same hearing, the director of research for ABC challenged the National Institute of Mental Health report for its use of correlations—the statistical measure of the relationship between two things. He said that "correlation can never be used to tell anything about cause and effect."

The heaviest gun of all, however, has been brought up by NBC. Its report, "Television and Aggression," is based on a study of 3,200 children and adolescents in Fort Worth, Tex., and Minneapolis. Between May 1970 and December 1973, they were interviewed—some of them as often as six times—in an attempt to determine of watching television made them aggressive. There is no evidence, the report says, that it did.

The report does find, however, that boys in "low socioeconomic circumstances," who are "socially insecure, have other emotional problems and are not accepted by their parents," tend to become aggressive. On the other hand, the NBC researchers say they can't be sure that these characteristics are "causes of aggression." As ABC said at the Congressional hearings, correlations don't mean a thing. The methodology in the NBC study seems to have made it unlikely that the researchers could identify anything, much less television, as a cause of aggression.

The study, in fact, buttresses the idea that television has no effect on viewers at all. At the recent Congressional hearing, ABC pointed out that a survey of 400 researchers found that only 1 percent of the researchers thought that television was "the cause" of aggressive behavior. ABC was missing the point. Hardly anyone thinks television is "the cause" of anything; it is, instead, one of many causes. Television's special contribution is that it reinforces violent values, weaving them more closely into the social fabric.

The National Coalition on Television Violence, an umbrella group of organizations that monitor television, says that violence in prime time now seems to be at a higher level than ever before. Dr. Thomas Radecki, the chairman of the coalition, says the increase in prime-time violence has not been "dramatic," but that over the years it has been "definite." There has also been a "definite" increase, he suggests, in the violence of movies, cartoons, comic books and even toys.

The popular culture reinforces itself this way, and at the very least the popular culture desensitizes us to violence. It makes violence a more acceptable form of behavior; it blunts the fact that it causes fear and pain. Television is a formidable part of the popular culture. Television changes our attitudes. If the networks decline to recognize this, it is unlikely they will recognize anything pertinent about violence.

APR 29

THE ANNENBERG SCHOOL OF
COMMUNICATIONS
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

April 19, 1983

Representative William J. Hughes
Chairman
Subcommittee on Crime
U. S. House of Representatives
Committee on the Judiciary
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hughes:

At the suggestion of Dr. David Pearl, Chief, Behavioral Sciences Branch of NIMH, I am submitting a copy of our letter to the Surgeon General and the accompanying critique of the ABC statement for inclusion in the public record of your recent hearing. The letter and critique represent the unanimous judgement of the seven scientific advisors to the NIMH report on Television and Behavior.

If you have any questions or need for further information, please call me or Dr. Pearl.

Sincerely yours,

George Gerbner

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications
and Dean

CC: Dr. Hayden Gregory
Mr. Ed O'Connell
Dr. David Pearl
Dr. Eli Rubinstein

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April 19, 1983

Dr. C. Everett Koop
Surgeon General
U.S. Public Health Service
Room 716 G
200 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Dr. Koop:

The undersigned were senior scientific advisors in a project of the National Institute of Mental Health that resulted in the 1982 publication of *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties.* We are writing you to express our strong support for the conclusions and scientific integrity of that NIMH publication. As you know, that two volume report was prepared as a ten-year update to the 1972 Report to the then Surgeon General, Dr. Jesse Steinfeld. The new NIMH report has recently come under public attack by some members of the television industry. The substance of that criticism, which we believe to be unfounded, calls for an informed response.

This letter is specifically intended as an open reply to a newly published 32 page pamphlet, widely distributed by the American Broadcasting Companies, Inc. The pamphlet, "A Research Perspective on Television and Violence," purports to be a rigorous and objective refutation of the NIMH report. However, the ABC statement is neither rigorous nor objective. Instead, it is a shallow attempt, ostensibly for public consumption, to focus on only one portion of the NIMH review, rehash industry attacks on independent research of the past ten years, ignore or distort both the evidence presented in the NIMH report and the consensus of the field, and present conclusions that obscure the issues and deceive the readers. It would be no exaggeration to compare this attempt by the television industry to the stubborn public position taken by the tobacco industry on the scientific evidence about smoking and health.

The ABC statement concentrates on four research issues. We deal with each of these in a critique of the ABC charges. Our critique is attached to this letter. We invite your attention to that analysis and request that you transmit it to the NIMH and others who may be concerned, for their information.

A telling indictment of the ABC position is inherent in findings on the effects of television that were ignored in their statement. Research has long since gone beyond the issue of violence. The summary (Volume 1) of the NIMH report devotes only nine out of 91 pages to that topic. Similarly, only 72 out of 362 pages of technical reports in Volume 2 deal with violence and aggression. Some other topics include: health-promoting possibilities; effects on cognitive and emotional functioning; effects on imagination, creativity, and prosocial behavior; and effects on education and learning. These are all parts of a related body of data which only confirms the obvious conclusion that television is an influential teacher of children and adults. It is ironic that the networks themselves have pursued and used the concept of positive programming in defense of some of their children's productions. The research on positive effects is no better or worse than that on violence and aggression. Yet the industry, by some convenient logic, accepts the former and disputes the latter.

What is especially distressing about ABC's effort to discredit a carefully developed assessment of research is that it only serves to confuse and deter the considerable opportunity for constructive change. It is now more than a decade since the original Surgeon General's Report. In testimony before Senator Pastore in March 1972, all three network presidents acknowledged, with some qualification, the findings on televised violence and pledged to improve television for children. (It is noteworthy that the most forthright and responsive statement was made by Elton Rule, President of ABC.) Surely the creativity, talent, and considerable resources of the television industry could have been put to better use than the renewed campaign of obfuscation and evasion after ten years of significant scientific progress. Indeed, instead of a positive response to that evidence, quality programming for children on commercial television has become increasingly rare.

As our appended critique indicates, the ABC argument is scientifically indefensible. By the very manner in which it was constructed, it is only the latest example of unwarranted resistance to the clear policy implications of overwhelming scientific evidence. The renewed attempt to evade, undermine, and discredit the work of hundreds of scientists summarized in the NIMH volumes and to shape the course of public discussion by selective attention and misrepresentation, is unworthy of an industry that professes -- and is licensed -- to serve the public interest.

While we realize that the Department of Health and Human Services has no direct regulatory responsibility for television, we did want to bring to your attention our confidence in the validity and integrity of the NIMH report, and our conviction that the research summarized in the report documents both the dangers of certain program content and the potential for positive change.

We believe ABC should reexamine its stance on this issue. We believe all broadcasters should exert their considerable influence to serve viewers more effectively and to use research to that end. We hope you will lend your good offices to this goal in any fashion you deem appropriate.

Respectfully,

Steven H. Chaffee
Director
Institute for Communication Research
Stanford University

George Gerbner
Professor of Communications and Dean
Annenberg School of Communications
University of Pennsylvania

Beatrix A. Hamburg
Professor of Clinical Psychiatry and Pediatrics
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Alberta E. Siegel
Professor of Psychology
Stanford University School of Medicine

Jerome L. Singer
Professor of Psychology
Yale Univeristy

Critique of

A RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE ON TELEVISION AND VIOLENCE
published by the American Broadcasting Companies, Inc., 1983.

By

Committee of Scientific Advisors to
the National Institute of Mental Health
report on *Television and Behavior*

The 32 page pamphlet, prepared by the Social Research Unit of ABC, is intended as a response to the 1982 NIMH publication, *Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties*. The booklet identifies itself as an analysis dedicated to "rigor, objectivity, and the adherence to a predetermined set of rules and procedures." (Page 1) It fails on all three counts. It reads instead like a slick brief for the defense replete with carefully worded misinterpretations, omission of large bodies of relevant evidence, and sheer misstatements of fact.

The pamphlet begins (Page 2) by calling into question the entire body of research reviewed in the NIMH report as "simply a reiteration of information which has already been made available." ABC sees this as a fatal flaw, despite the fact that the foreword to the NIMH report and most of the press coverage made clear that the report was not based on new research, but was a comprehensive and integrative review of existing research. The ABC interpretation suggests that once published, research findings quickly go stale and lose their validity or relevance. On the contrary, of course, findings accumulate with later studies testing, confirming, and extending those published earlier.

What is especially lacking in rigor or objectivity is the premise by ABC that research on violence stands in isolation from the larger body of research reviewed by the NIMH report. Perhaps the most telling confirmatory evidence on the effects of televised violence is that it is now only one part of a massive body of research, all of which clearly points to the obvious; television entertainment is a teacher. A pattern of effects has emerged from all this evidence. It would be indeed anomalous if the findings on violence and aggression did not fit into this larger pattern.

Ignoring that crucial issue, the ABC pamphlet isolates four specific conclusions from what is actually a minor part of the NIMH report. In this critique we shall address only some of the many violations of the principles to which that booklet claims to be dedicated.

We shall begin by citing the ABC summary of and response to each of the four NIMH conclusions addressed in the pamphlet, and follow that with our critique, citing ABC further as needed to illustrate our examples.

> "NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 1
> The research findings support the conclusion
> of a causal relationship between television
> violence and aggressive behavior.
>
> "ABC RESPONSE:
> The research does not support the conclusion
> of a causal relationship."

The attribution of causality is a complex way of defining relationships, even in the physical sciences. The question is not how irrefutable the causal conclusion may be, especially in the social sciences, but rather can it be invoked at all. In 1972, the Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee, on which two distinguished members were full-time scientists for NBC and CBS respectively, and on which three other members had been part-time consultants to the industry, came to the unanimous conclusion that there is "some preliminary indication of a causal relationship, but a good deal of research remains to be done before one can have confidence in these conclusions."

The ten year update provided much additional research to add "confidence" to the conclusions.

Defining and Measuring Violent Behavior

Most research in the field has concerned itself with the linkage between "televised violence" and "aggressive behavior." Rarely have scientists attempted to observe, let alone induce, "violent behavior." The ABC statement uses a subterfuge in equating aggressive behavior with violent behavior and then asking if televised violence causes violent behavior. While few studies, for obvious reasons, can legitimately explore that connection, one notable instance does exist (Belson, 1978). That study did find such a causal connection between televised violence and actual antisocial behavior. Despite the fact that the study was funded by CBS, when it was independently published in book form, it was dismissed by the industry as merely 'correlational." That charge is now leveled by ABC against the NIMH report's conclusions.

Use of Correlation to Imply Causation

Although even the stimulation of harmful tendencies in millions of children is of no small consequence, ABC obfuscates the issue. It states baldly that "The point is, correlation can never tell us anything about causation." (Page 6) Even theoretically, let alone in a practical way, this is simply not true. Correlation is a necessary but not sufficient condition in a causal relationship. To argue that a study is "correlational" as the industry did with the Belson study, is not legitimately to dismiss its significance. If there had been no correlation, the question of causation would have been settled long ago. Instead, study after study by independent investigators found significant correlations.

The Use of Convergence Theory

The ABC pamphlet next develops something called Convergence Theory to argue that scientists can be led to accept any "widespread belief" on which many different studies seem to converge. If there is any substance to that curious criticism, it must be in the basic assumption behind the operation of the television industry itself. Ten billion dollars annually are expended on the "widespread belief" that advertising induces people to buy products. There is no more definitive causal relationship between advertising on television and subsequent buying behavior than there is between televised violence and later aggressive behavior.

To put it in simple statistical terms, let us assume that finding a significant positive correlation, no matter how small, was equivalent to a penny falling "heads." Assume further that finding no such correlation is a case of "tails." What would one infer if the penny fell "heads" ninety-three times out of a hundred? The advertisers, and those of us doing research on television effects (where a vast majority of studies comes up "heads") are quite convinced that betting on "heads" is the correct way to go.

Of course, no researcher cited by NIMH argues that television violence is the only or even necessarily the main factor in aggression. The conclusion on which there is a significant "convergence" is that it is a contributing factor. Having set up a straw-man relationship between causation, correlation, and convergence, ABC next argues that only a handful of studies support the NIMH conclusions.

Review of NIMH Studies

The ABC statement begins: "The NIMH technical chapter on violence and aggression in Volume 2 cites 14 studies which the author suggests proves a positive relationship between television and violence and which the NIMH Report relies upon to reach its conclusion of a cause-effect relationship." (Page 7)

The chapter referred to is a rather comprehensive review not just of 14 studies but of the larger penumbra of research on televised violence which further illuminates this body of findings. In fact, 95 publications are referenced in this chapter, most of which support the major argument.

The ABC statement points out that this chapter does not discuss a study by NBC researcher Milavsky, one that dismissed television's effect on aggression as negligible, "although the NBC study appears in its own chapter in the NIMH report." Of course, it is precisely because another chapter was devoted to the NBC study that it would have been superfluous to incorporate its findings in the chapter under discussion. Indeed, it was NIMH and our committee that invited the NBC researchers and requested the inclusion of the NBC study as a separate chapter of Volume 2. What ABC implies was an omission is in fact the result of a conscientious effort on the part of NIMH and our Committee to include all relevant research. The conclusions of the NBC study were carefully considered in the final evaluation and summary published in Volume 1.

In sum, ABC has not refuted the NIMH conclusion of a causal relationship between television violence and aggression, and has misstated both the convergence and weight of evidence bearing on the issue.

> "NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 2
> There is a clear consensus among most researchers
> that television violence leads to aggressive behavior.
>
> "ABC RESPONSE:
> There exists a significant debate within
> the research community over the relationship between
> television and aggressive behavior."

ABC found one (unpublished) study (Bybee, et al.) that it could construe as suggesting that there is no consensus among academic researchers. The problem is that ABC misrepresented even that study. To be precise, the sample polled was not all "academic researchers," as ABC states (Page 8) but members of professional societies in speech and journalism, an unknown proportion of which are researchers. More importantly, researchers in the field of television include many psychologists, sociologists, and other social scientists who were also absent from the sample.

Even more deceptive is ABC's interpretation of the results of that survey. The issue is not whether television is the cause of aggression. As we have already noted, no responsible researcher makes that claim. All complex behavior has many causes. What the research results showed, as NIMH reported, is that television is a significant contributor to such behavior. On that point, the Bybee study cited by ABC actually showed a clear consensus. About two-thirds of those polled agreed that television increased children's aggressive behavior. Had more scientists from other fields been included, that consensus would probably have been even higher. The authors of the Bybee study are themselves distressed at the ABC misrepresentation of their findings.

Attempting to neutralize the great preponderance of published studies that find the linkage, ABC claims that studies which find an effect are more likely to be published than studies with no findings. That seeming anomaly would have disappeared if ABC had correctly stated that well-designed studies, with clearly developed hypotheses, and careful statistical analyses, leading to scientifically defensible conclusions, are more likely to be published in reputable scientific journals than poor studies with inconclusive results.

It is an insult to the research community to state as ABC does -- baldly and without qualification -- that "Since editors naturally prefer to report results, publication policies can result in a distortion of the scientific evidence which actually exists." (Page 9) In that sentence, the ABC statement attempts to discredit the entire formal process of scientific publication.

Finally, ABC cites seven references to claim that many academic scientists have concluded that the research evidence does not support the causal linkage. In fact, that list of seven all but exhausts the list of "many." In the context of the previous example of 93 "heads" coming up in the penny toss, these are the seven "tails."

In sum, the ABC has not refuted the NIMH conclusion that there is a clear consensus among research scientists on this issue.

> "NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 3
> Despite slight variations over the past decade, the amount of violence on television has remained at consistently high levels.
>
> "ABC RESPONSE:
> There has been a decrease in the overall amount of violence in recent years."

ABC's contention that "there has been a decrease in the overall amount of violence in recent years" is based on an in-house CBS report and is not supported by independent studies. In any case, it does not necessarily contradict the NIMH conclusion that "the amount of violence on television has remained at consistently high levels."

Singled out for special attention by ABC is an extensive and long-standing research project called Cultural Indicators, conducted at the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communications since the late 1960's. The project began as a study for the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (the "Eisenhower Commission") and continued under various foundation and medical auspices to investigate many aspects of television content and viewer conception of social reality.

Ignoring its proper name, broad scope, many publications, and assessment by NIMH and others, the ABC pamphlet reaches back six years to claim that "The Gerbner content analyses have generated a great deal of controversy within the research community (Newcomb, Coffin and Tuchman, Blank)." Of the authors cited as being responsible for the "controversy", Coffin, Tuchman, and Blank were network employees and Newcomb a humanistic scholar whose dialogue with the Cultural Indicators team was as supportive as critical of the effort. Of course, all complex research relevant to social policy does and should be debated. But ABC conceals the actual debate from the readers of its pamphlet; it does not mention the rebuttals published in the same journals -- and usually in the very same issues -- as the works cited.

The ABC pamphlet repeats perennial network objections as if they had never been addressed and dealt with both in the literature and in the NIMH report. In fact, at least three chapters of Volume 2 of the NIMH report provide critical overviews and assessments of all aspects of the content analyses ABC insists are "controversial." One of these, an overview of measures of violence in television content, compares several measures including that of Cultural Indicators and the CBS study. It finds "no detectable trend," and observes (on Page 117): "Regardless of measure, changes that within the scope of 2 or 3 years would appear to constitute an upward or downward shift become, in the long run, oscillations." That and other similar reviews of the research evidence by independent scholars led NIMH and our Committee to conclude that despite variations over the years, violence on television "remained at consistently high levels."

The Definition of Violence

The ABC pamphlet supports its contention of a decrease in the amount of violence by reference to a CBS study not subject to peer review or other scientific scrutiny and not regularly published. However, it was introduced into the 1981 Congressional hearings on "Social/Behavioral Effects of Violence on Television" as the industry's attempt to counter evidence presented by researchers at the hearing. An examination of the 1981 hearing record (e.g. page 108) shows that CBS succeeded in "reducing" the amount of violence reported by simply excluding a significant (and unreported) amount of violent representations. (The violence monitoring effort announced by ABC itself with much fanfare a few years ago did not seem to yield results suitable for its own pamphlet.)

The ABC pamphlet argues (on Page 10) that "The CBS study and the Gerbner study utilize radically different definitions of violence and consequently arrive at very different conclusions." The CBS study definition of violence (not cited by ABC) is "The use of physical force against persons or animals or the articulated, explicit threat of physical force to compel particular behavior on the part of a person." The ABC pamphlet states that "Gerbner defines violence as: 'The overt expression of physical force against self or other compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed, or actually hurting or killing.'" The two definitions are in practice virtually identical. ABC argues that "What makes the Gerbner definition unique is that this definition is applied not only to serious and realistic depictions of violence, but is expanded to include comedy and slapstik, accidents, and acts of nature such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes." Actually, both definitions include the use of physical force in any context. The difference is *not* in definition, as ABC claims. It is in what CBS chose not to include in its report.

The counts CBS excluded from its report were those it claimed, without evidence, to be "harmless" acts of "accidental" and "humorous" violence. The evidence reviewed by NIMH indicates that violence in any context may teach powerful lessons and can be harmful in its effects. But even with such manipulation, the CBS study was able to reduce its violence score from 138 incidents a week in 1972-73 to 105 a week in 1980-81. That is still more violence in one week of prime time watching alone than most people experience otherwise in a lifetime. It can hardly be seen as contradicting the NIMH finding that "violence on television remained at consistently high levels."

How much of all that mayhem is "accidental" and "humorous" violence that the networks claim is "harmless?" Here again, ABC is wide of the mark. On Page 11 the pamphlet claims that "in a number of Gerbner studies, over one-third of all the violence counted did *not* result from human action but was caused by accidents or acts of nature." (Emphasis in the original.) What are the facts?

The ABC pamphlet deals with prime time programs alone. The source of ABC's observation on "human action" is the original Report to the Surgeon General, *Television and Social Behavior*, *Volume 1*, *Media Content and Control*, Page 40 and Table 67 on Page 107. Those figures refer not to prime time but to the combined results of prime time and weekend daytime children's (mostly cartoon) programs. In cartoons, humanized animals rather than humans, strictly defined, commit most violence. Therefore, the "over one-third of all the violence counted" was *not* "caused by accidents or acts of nature" but mostly by cartoon "animals" committing anthropomorphic mayhem. (ABC uses cartoon violence only to obfuscate the facts but not to express concern over the most violent and exploitive part of programming, what the trade calls the "kidvid ghetto.")

A careful look at the same Table 67 would have revealed that when only regular programs (rather than cartoons) are considered, as in prime time, nine out of ten acts of violence are perpetrated by human agents. Table 69 in the same series also shows that of these acts of hurting and killing people only one-fifth appear in a "light" or "humorous" context, with consequences that, according to available evidence, cannot be blithely dismissed.

Where does that muddle leave those real "acts of nature such as floods, earthquakes, and hurricanes" that according to ABC "distort" the amount of violence reported? In light of the facts they also shrink into insignificance. An analysis of Cultural Indicators data for 15 sample periods since 1969 shows a grand total of only 13 fictional "acts of nature" hurting and killing. The viewer bombarded with violence every hour of prime time has to watch an average of three and a half weeks to encounter one act of "accidental" violence. The social pattern of such victimization (i.e. what types of characters tend to get hurt or killed "accidentally") may be far from inconsequential. But the rarity of the occurence makes the ABC claim groundless.

The argument that an "expanded" definition "distorts" even one set of violence figures used in the NIMH report is thus both deceptive and trivial.

The Violence Index and Sample

One of the oldest claims of network publicists, renewed here despite ample clarification through the years, is that the Violence Index "is an arbitrary and idiosyncratic measure which does not accurately reflect program content. Rather than simply count the number of violent incidents per program, Gerbner combines various numerical scores, some of which are weighted to reflect his own theoretical and controversial assumptions." (Page 11)

This reiteration ignores responses published since 1972 and the annual publication of the Violence Index in which the "simple count of the number of violent incidents per program" is separately tabulated for the convenience of those who prefer that simple measure to also considering the pervasiveness of violence in all programming and lethal vs. non-lethal consequences. An extensive review of tests in Volume 2 of the NIMH report found that the Violence Index "meets the critical statistical and empirical requirements of an index: unidimensionality and internal homogeneity." (Pages 167-8)

ABC's quibble with the sample employed in the Violence Index is similarly misdirected. Without citing any support, the ABC pamphlet states that "The use of one week's worth of programming to represent the total content of a 52 week season is clearly inadequate." (Page 11) As explained many times, and reviewed in at least two technical chapters of the NIMH Report, but ignored by ABC, experiments with up to 7 weeks of programming have not produced notably different results (e.g. see Volume 2 Page 113). The NIMH review concluded: "These studies thus indicate that while a larger sample might increase precision, given the operational definitions and multidimensional measures that are sensitive to a variety of significant aspects of television violence, the 1-week sample yields stable results with high cost efficiency." (Volume 2, Page 165) Certainly, the consistency of violence and other measures of fictional demography and power from year to year would be hard to explain with a sample that is inadequate to the task for which it was designed.

The extensive research evidence supporting the definition of violence and its measurement in samples of television content has not been examined by ABC; it has been ignored. The ABC claims appear to be designed for the uninitiated, repeating contentions network publicists have been propagating for over a decade. In sum, the ABC statement did not refute the NIMH conclusion that violence on television remains at consistently high levels.

> "NIMH CONCLUSION NO. 4
> Television has been shown to cultivate television-influenced attitudes among viewers. Heavy viewers are more likely to be more fearful and less trusting of other people than are light viewers as a result of their exposure to television.
>
> "ABC RESPONSE:
> The research does not support the conclusion that television significantly cultivates viewer attitudes and perceptions of social reality."

ABC moves on to challenge the extensive body of research findings on television's cultivation of viewer attitudes and conceptions of reality. The ABC pamphlet claims that even though the NIMH report accepted many of the findings of the cultivation analysis, "the authors of the technical report chapter reach a different conclusion. They state, 'The evidence concerning the causal direction of television's impact on social reality is not sufficient for strong conclusions' (Hawkins and Pingree)."

The fact is that the chapter by Hawkins and Pingree *supports* the cultivation theory and confirms findings cited by NIMH. "Causal direction" is not an issue in cultivation theory which holds that the pervasive and repetitive patterns of television *cultivate* rather than only create attitudes and perceptions. After the passage cited by ABC, Hawkins and Pingree observe that "the relationship between viewing and social reality may be reciprocal." (Page 239) In their review of many studies, including their own, Hawkins and Pingree conclude:

> "Is there a relationship between television viewing and social reality? Most studies show evidence for a link, regardless of the kind of social reality studied. These studies cover a diverse range of areas including prevalence of violence, family structures, interpersonal mistrust, fear of victimization, traditional sex roles, family values, images of older people, attitudes about doctors, and concern about racial problems....Relationships between viewing and demographic measures of social reality closely linked to television content appear to hold despite controls." (Page 237)

Another example of the criticisms cited by ABC is the statement that ". . . [C]ultivation researchers group 'non-viewers' who don't watch television with 'light' viewers who watch less than average. When non-viewers are analyzed independently of light viewers, their fear and mistrust scores are actually *higher* than light viewers. Similarly, "extremely heavy viewers" are grouped with 'heavy viewers.' When extremely heavy viewers -- who view eight or more hours of television daily -- are analyzed independently, they are found to be *less* fearful and mistrusting than heavy viewers." (Page 14)

The facts were reported in an article in the same journal from which ABC selected its information, but they were omitted from the ABC pamphlet. What are these facts?

Non-viewers and "extremely heavy viewers" are very small and atypical groups (about 5 percent of the population each. Their deviant responses are trivial in size and nonsignificant statistically. In any case, the inclusion of these deviant groups means that the NIMH conclusions about cultivation are *underestimated*; when they are excluded, the resulting patterns are even stronger for the remaining 90 percent of the population.

A series of additional repetitions of criticisms already dealt with in the research literature and reviewed in the NIMH report further strains the credibility of the ABC "critique." Clearly its authors are aware of the scholarly exchanges that have taken place; they seem not to have missed a single negative comment, no matter how far-fetched. Yet they seem to be oblivious to the much more numerous extensions and confirmations of findings by independent scholars in the United States and abroad.

In sum, the ABC pamphlet deceives the reader not familiar with the research literature. It is thus the ABC pamphlet and not the NIMH report that distorts, in its general design as well as its details, the evidence on television and violence that it purports to place in perspective.

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and
Mental Health Administration
National Institute of Mental Health
Rockville MD 20857

April 15, 1983

Mr. Ed O'Connell, Counsel
Subcommitee on Crime
Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of Representatives
207 E. Cannon Building
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Mr. O'Connell:

When I spoke to you earlier today, I mentioned that I had shown Mr. Gregory a copy of a recent survey conducted by Dr. John Murray on researcher views on the NIMH Update Project conclusions regarding televised violence and behavior. Mr. Gregory indicated he would like me to send a copy to the Committee so that it could be put on record. Accordingly, a copy is enclosed. Dr. Murray is willing for this to be published in the record or to be used in any way that the Committee wishes.

You will note that the survey found, overall, that 82 percent of the active researchers queried agreed with the NIMH statement on the impact of TV violence.

I appreciated the opportunity of testifing before the Committee and will be pleased if I can be of further service.

Sincerely yours,

David Pearl

David Pearl, Ph.D.
Chief, Behavioral Sciences
Research Branch

Enclosure

Survey Conducted By
Dr. John Murray Ph.D.
Boys Town Center
Boys Town, Nebraska 68010

RESULTS OF AN INFORMAL POLL OF KNOWLEDGEABLE PERSONS CONCERNING THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION VIOLENCE

Background

The attached questionnaire was distributed to a sample of researchers and knowledgeable observers of children and television in order to assess the extent of agreement with a recent statement about the impact of television violence.

The statement in question is one of the principal conclusions contained in a recent report from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH): "...the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for the effect."

Survey

The participants in this survey do not comprise a random sample of all experts in this area, but they do represent a broad spectrum of available expertise and professional opinion.

These professionals can claim expertise in the area of children and television by virtue of the fact that each person has written articles or reports on this topic. In fact the 116 participants were the sole or senior authors of 597 books and articles and were contributing authors to many additional reports.[1] Moreover, those surveyed were drawn from several professional fields (i.e., psychology, sociology, and communications) and are employed in universities, research institutes, consumer organizations and the television industry.

The ballots were distributed during the period March 1-10, 1983. The results presented below are based upon a count conducted at the end of March.

---

[1] A Note on Professional Expertise: A recent bibliography of the past 25 years of research on children and television (Murray, 1980) included citations for 2,886 reports. These reports were produced by 1,570 senior, individual, and corporate authors indicating an average level of professional productivity of 1.8 reports. However, the 116 participants in this survey have been the senior authors on an average of 5.1 reports suggesting that these professionals are among the most productive and knowledgeable persons concerned with the issues of children and television.

Results

The ballots were sent to 116 persons who were identified as members of the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Sociological Association (ASA), the International Communication Association (ICA), or persons who are not affiliated with one of these professional associations (NPA).

Of the 109 experts surveyed (7 questionnaires were undeliverable at the stated address) 68 were completed and returned yielding a response rate of 62%. The table below contains a description of professional opinions on the impact of televised violence offered by the experts who responded to this survey.

	Professional Membership[a]				
	APA	ASA	ICA	NPA	TOTAL
# in sample	43	10	21	35	109
# responding	31	5	13	19	68
Response rate	72%	50%	62%	54%	62%
Type of Response (#):					
Strongly Agree	24	1	10	12	47
Moderately Agree	4	--	1	4	9
Strongly Disagree	1	3	1	1	6
Moderately Disagree	1	--	--	1	2
No Opinion	--	--	--	--	--
Unable to Decide	1	1	1	1	4
% Agreement on the impact of TV violence	90%	20%	85%	84%	82%

[a] The total sample of 109 included 43 psychologists (APA), 10 sociologists (ASA), 21 communication researchers (ICA), and 35 professionals (NPA) who were not affiliated with one of these associations.

APR 19 1983

NATIONAL COALITION ON TELEVISION VIOLENCE

Board of Directors
Thomas Radecki, M.D., NCTV Chairperson
Southern Illinois Univ. School of Medicine
Grace C. Baresinger
National PTA Past President
John R. Lion, M.D., Founder, Violence Clinic
Dept. of Psychiatry, Univ. of Maryland
Townes Osborn, President
Washington Assoc. for Television and Children
Nelson Price, Public Media Director
United Methodist Communications
Sam Simon, Executive Director
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Sally Steenland, Women's Issues Consultant

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APR 19 1983

Sub

April 15, 1983

Chairman William J. Hughes
Subcommittee on Crime
341 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Hughes:

As Washington Director of the National Coalition on Television Violence, I would like to inform you of my organization's desire to participate in future hearings on violence, crime, and the media. From testimony presented at the hearing of April 13, I feel there is an urgent need to have NCTV's testimony heard.

The National Coalition on Television Violence is a non-profit, public interest group which views the use of violence to entertain by the commercial networks as an environmental hazard threatening the welfare of the public. We are not alone in this opinion: The American Medical Association has deemed violence on television as a hazard threatening the welfare "of young Americans and indeed our future society."

It is clear to us that the use of violence to entertain presents an urgent public health problem. Accordingly NCTV would like to share its views before the subcommittee on crime. I feel our research would contribute positively to this subcommittee's investigation.

Enclosed you will find a copy of our most recent press release which includes our monitoring results of network television. If you have any questions, comments, or would like to discuss this further please contact me.

Sincerely,

Brian Malloy

Brian Malloy
Washington Director

BM/eb

PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE PRESS RELEASE

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TV Violence At Record Levels

Action Demanded During National Children and Television Week (March 13-19)

For Release: Wednesday, March 16, 1983

Contact: Dr. Thomas Radecki, M.D. Chairman, (217) 359-8235
Karen Hubner, Monitoring Director, (217) 359-8235
Brian Malley, Washington Office, (202) 462-0515

The National Coalition on Television Violence(NCTV) released its most recent monitoring data today on prime-time and Saturday morning network TV violence. It has found that prime-time violence is presently at its highest level on record averaging 8.7 acts of violence per hour in the most recently completed quarter (Sept. 27, 1982-Dec 26, 1982). This surpassed the previous record of 8.0 acts per hour set in the first quarter of 1982(comparable data available since 1967 from Univ. of Pennsylvania and/or NCTV).

NCTV reports findings a record of 28 high violence programs accounting for 50% of all prime-time television programming. Its preliminary data for January and February of 1983 show even higher levels of violence averaging well over 9 violent acts per hour.

Network TV's most violent series according to NCTV is The A Team(NBC) with 39 acts of violence per hour(a gang of U.S. soldiers wanted by the U.S. military has gone underground and works as mercenaries taking on jobs that the police can't or won't do). Next is 1982's most violent program, Fall Guy(ABC) at 34 acts/hr, followed by Tales of the Gold Monkey(ABC)(31), Voyagers(NBC)(30), Gavilan(NBC)(27) Dukes of Hazzard(CBS)(23), Greatest American Hero(ABC)(22), T.J. Hooker(ABC)(20), Simon & Simon(CBS)(20), Magnum P.I.(CBS)(19), Knightriders(NBC)(18), etc. TV movies made up one-third of all TV violence.

Cartoon violence decreased from record highs but still averaged 25.6 violent acts per hour with CBS most violent.

New high violence programs with only one or two episodes rated include: Renegades(ABC)(42), High Performance(ABC)(26), Wizards & Warriors(CBS)(15). Several new low violence programs have been introduced but make up less than 1/3 of the new program time: Condo(ABC)(0), Mama's Family(NBC)(0), Teacher's Only(NBC)(0), and Family Tree(NBC)(2).

ABC remains the most violent network with 10.2 violent acts per hour followed by CBS(8.3) and NBC(7.6). NCTV continues to ask its participating organizations to print the names and addresses of the heaviest sponsors of violent programs. Philip Morris (Miller's Beer & Seven-up) is the #1 violence advertiser(#2 in the previous quarter). It is followed by Polaroid, General Motors, IBM, and Magnavox. Low violence advertisers Kodak and Hallmark along with General Electric, Noxell, and American Home Products were praised. NCTV continues to encourage its letter-writing pressure campaign.

Dr. Thomas Radecki, M.D., Psychiatric Director of the Champaign County Mental Health Center in Champaign, Illinois and Chairman of the coalition called the situation "shocking." He said, "The National Institute of Mental Health has proclaimed the evidence of harmful effects on normal children and adult viewers to be 'overwhelming.' The American Medical Association announced at its December, 1982 national board meeting the need for immediate action stating that TV and entertainment violence is causing an epidemic of violence amongst the young people of this country. It is time that Congress face up to its responsibility. It is obvious the networks, broadcasters, movie industry, and pay cable TV channels will continue to disregard the sizeable damage that they are doing to the American society with their heavy promotion of violence."

Radecki went on to say, "The most popular cable TV channel for children as well as adults appears to be HBO and the other pay cable movie channels. NCTV has recently documented the very high levels of well-crafted war, revenge, and horror movie violence on these channels. Combined with the high levels of violence on prime-time and Saturday morning, TV's second generation is being exposed to even more violence than its first. The first TV generation has grown up to be the most violent generation of young adults in America's history, murdering 300%, raping 400%, and assaulting 500% more often per capita than their parents' generation at the same ages. It is abundantly clear that the glorification of violence in TV and movie entertainment is playing a major role in that epidemic."

Radecki said, "We have not heard of any action whatsoever coming from the U.S. House Subcommittee on Telecommunications(Chair--Rep Timothy Wirth, D-Colo.) since their hearings in October, 1981. I am asking that in today's Telecommunications hearings on children and television(Wednesday, March 16th, 9:30 a.m.), that we be given assurances that some definite actions on the problem of broadcast and cable TV violence will be forthcoming. We have documented hundreds of thousands of dollars of campaign contributions to this committee from the broadcast and cable TV industry. We ask that this committee not forget the public's interest in today's hearings and on the issue of violence. I ask that people write their congressmen to demand immediate further hearings on entertainment violence and immediate concrete action."

Radecki suggests a number of actions that can and should be taken. He states that the most important is that of counteradvertising. "NCTV has estimated that almost one billion dollars worth of air-time and print advertising is spent by the TV and movie industries promoting violent entertainment each year. Only 3% of Americans adults and children realize that they are harmfully affected by the violence they consume. Viewers are literally brainwashed through this massive one-sided advertising into thinking that entertainment violence could not have a harmful effect on them personally. People actually sometimes become angry at the suggestion that they personally might be affected. Yet, the research suggests that probably anyone who consumes the national average of 10-15 hours of violent entertainment per week is unconsciously affected in a harmful way. The most common effects are significant increases in anger, irritability, and loss of temper, a desensitization towards violence, and a greater fear and distrust of the world around you."

Radecki said additional needed congressional actions include warnings attached to programs containing high levels of entertainment violence, better funding of PPS with the establishment of 3 to 4 PBS cable channels to deal more fully with consumer affairs, science and documentaries, and public affairs and national access(Radecki called PBS the best watched, low violence alternative available. He called it the least expensive crime-stopper in the U.S. today); and government regulations that will promote broadcast and cable TV's accountability to the public, encourage diversity of opinion, and guarantee that the interests of children and adult Americans are served. Radecki said more research is needed on the harmful effects of TV sports violence(boxing, professional wrestling, ice hockey), soap opera emotional violence, and toy and games violence which are heavily promoted on TV. He called on the committee to make research funds available for these areas.

Grace Baisinger, past president of the National PTA, said, "I find this constantly escalating violence deplorable and distressing. We believe in the Surgeon General's Report. It is very important to get this monitoring information to the American public. The ultimate goal is to teach children and adults to turn off the TV when violence is being used merely to entertain, excite, or titillate the viewer." Dr. Radecki praised the National PTA's Critical Viewing Skills courses. He said, however, "Unless the message of the PTA, the AMA, and the National Institute of Mental Health gets to the viewer with the help of counteradvertising providing one ad warning against using violence to entertain yourself for every two promoting violence, there will be little impact from these efforts. The TV and movie industry is engaging in false and deceptive advertising by promoting these violent programs as good entertainment.

Townes Osborn, past president of the Washington Association for Television and Children, said, "Besides this incredible increase in prime-time violence, we have to remember that Saturday morning cartoons are more violent still. Children are an important long-term investment for this country. Industry should be partners with us, not adversaries.

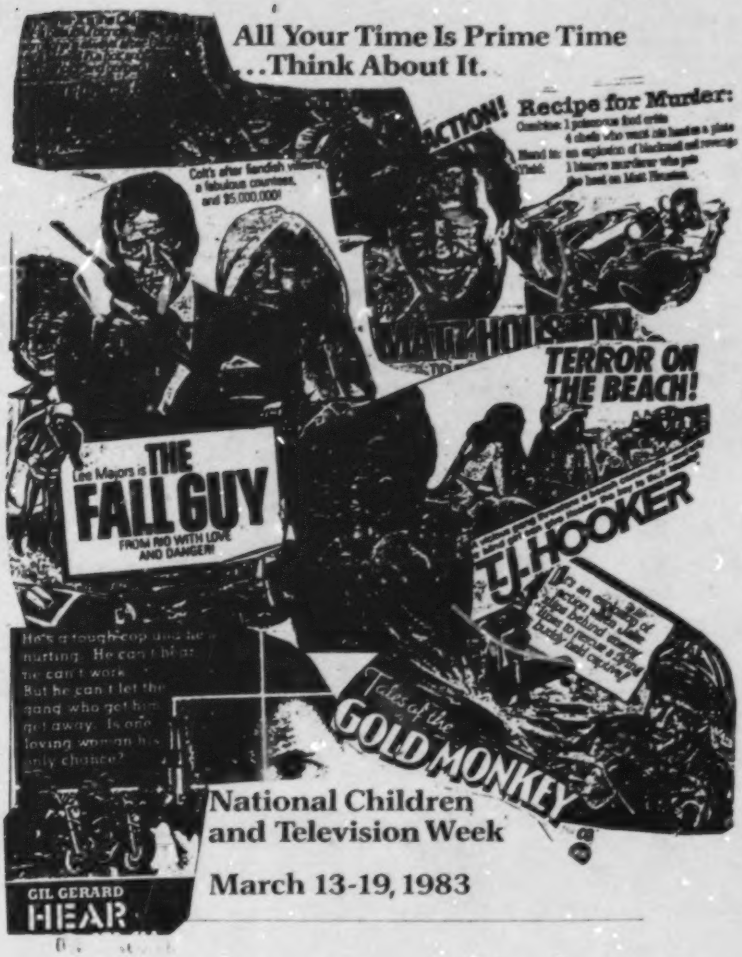
Children are not there to be exploited. But the industry has chosen to exploit vulnerable minds for short-term economic gain. It doesn't make sense to me that we are inducing, through TV, values which go against the peace and security of our country."

Dr. Radecki called for continued pressure on advertisers as well as calling on the networks to begin serious discussions on the violence issue. Dr. Radecki noted that NCTV will also shortly submit a petition for counter-advertising to the FCC based on the Fairness Doctrine and with the FTC based on deceptive and dishonest advertising practices.

Dr. Radecki said, "TV and movie violence are at an all-time high. Things are bound to get still worse with the increasing sales of pay cable movie channels with large amounts of gruesome murder and rape. In addition we export this problem to other countries and, thereby, further increase levels of violence in a world ready to explode. Entertainment violence fosters values hostile to democracy and to Judeo-Christian ethics. We are witnessing a breakdown of civilization in large part due to unrestrained greed to make money. In a democracy it is the right of the people to take just and sensible action and it is the duty of our elected representatives to see that that action is taken."

Radecki deplored the image of glorified macho male violence with women as a reward that he claims is extremely common to TV. Radecki pointed to research showing that 35% of American men have said there was some chance they would rape a women if assured of getting away with it. Radecki estimated from available survey data that over 10% of American men have raped women with the most common victims being wives and girlfriends. He noted evidence that at least 28% of American couples physically strike each other at least once a year with a high percentage of women chronically abused.

Radecki noted that NCTV has now accumulated close to 850 studies done in the U.S. and 18 foreign countries documenting the harm of entertainment violence--violence whose purpose is to excite, thrill, or titillate the viewer rather than to educate the viewer about the tragedy and harm of real-life violence. He notes studies showing major amounts of school violence, violence in the home setting for both children and adults, and criminal street violence coming from the effects of violent programming. He estimates that between 25% and 50% of all violence is coming from the promotion of violence in entertainment. He notes many other causes of violence including alcohol(also promoted by TV), drug abuse, detertiorating social systems, heredity, poor parenting and peer modeling, etc. However, he points out that Dr. William Belson of the London School of Economics found that TV and movie violence was the #1 cause of youth violence in a large CBS-funded study that looked at 227 possible causes of violence.


ACTION!
Recipe for Murder:
Combine: 1 poisonous food critic
4 chefs who want his head on a plate
Blend in: an explosion of blackmail and revenge
Yield: 1 bizarre murderer who puts the heat on Matt Houston.
Colt's after fiendish villains, a fabulous countess, and $5,000,000!
MATT HOUSTON
TERROR ON THE BEACH!
Lee Majors is THE FALL GUY
FROM RIO WITH LOVE AND DANGER!
T.J. HOOKER
Tales of the GOLD MONKEY
He's a tough cop and he's hurting. He can't hear he can't work. But he can't let the gang who got him get away. Is one loving woman his only chance?
GIL GERARD
HEAR

All Your Time Is Prime Time
...Think About It.

National Children
and Television Week

March 13-19, 1983

Remaining High Violence Programs:	
11. ABC Monday Night Movie	19
12. The Quest(ABC)	17
13. Matt Houston(ABC)	17
14. Hart to Hart(ABC)	17
15. NBC Sunday Night Movie	16
16. Fantasy Island(ABC)	15
17. ABC Sunday Night Movie	15
18. CBS Saturday Night Movie	15
19. CBS Sunday Night Movie	14
20. ABC Friday Night Movie	13
21. Tucker's Witch(CBS)	12
22. Walt Disney(CBS)	11
23. Powers of Matthew Star-NBC	11
24. Hill Street Blues(NBC)	11
25. Cagney & Lacey(CBS)	10
26. The Devlin Connection(NBC)	10
27. CBS Tuesday Night Movie	10
28. CBS Wednesday Night Movie	

Violent Movies on Prime-time Included:	
Battle Beyond the Stars	56
The Big Red One	53
The Shadow Riders	47
Moonraker	43
The Outlaw Josie Wales	40
Every Which Way But Loose	38
The Blue and the Gray, Pt 3	36
The Blues Brothers	36
Dr. No	34
Blazing Saddles	34
The Gauntlet	34
The Blue & the Gray, Pt 2	29
Honeyboy	27
Deadly Encounter	24
My Bodyguard	19
The Final Countdown	18
Love at Fist Bite	17
Animal House	16
Smokey and the Bandit II	16

		Violence per hour			
Above Average Violence					
Remington Steele	NBC	9	Family Ties	NBC	1
Seven Brides for Seven Brothers	CBS	8	Cheers	NBC	1
The Devlin Connection	NBC	8	Taxi	NBC	1
Chips	NBC	8	Silver Spoons	NBC	1
ather Murphy	NBC	6	Diff'rent Strokes	NBC	1
Benjamin	CBS	4	The New Odd Couple	ABC	1
verl & Shirley	ABC	4	* Dallas	CBS	0
ley's Believe It O. Not	ABC	4	Archie Bunker's Place	CBS	0
son	ABC	4	One Day at a Time	CBS	0
House on the Prarie	NBC	3	Alice	CBS	0
py Days	ABC	3	Newhart	CBS	0
			Gloria	CBS	0
Low Violence			60 Minutes	CBS	0
Trapper John, MD	CBS	2	Fame	NBC	0
Filthy Rich	CBS	2	The Facts of Life	NBC	0
Three's Company	ABC	2	Love, Sidney	NBC	0
Star of the Family	ABC	2	* Dynasty	ABC	0
Gimmie a Break	NBC	2	Love Boat	ABC	0
Knots Landing *	CBS	1	Too Close for Comfort	ABC	0
Falcon Crest	CBS	1	It Takes Two	ABC	0
The Jeffersons	CBS	1	9 to 5	ABC	0
Square Pegs	CBS	1	Joanie Loves Chachi	ABC	0
M A S H	CBS		That's Incredible	ABC	0
St. Elsewhere	NBC		20/20	ABC	0
Real People	NBC				

* emotional violence

Saturday Morning Cartoons--Fall Monitoring:	
New Season	
Flash Gordon(NBC)	50
Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner(CBS) 2 hours	48
Blackstar(CBS)	48
Pandemonium(CBS)	36
Pac Man(ABC)	36
Hulk/Spider Man(NBC)	34
Smurfs(NBC)	28
Richie Rich/Little Rascals*(ABC)	24
Superfriends(ABC)	24
Flintstones(NBC)	23
Popeye(CBS)	19
Scooby Doo(ABC)	19
Mork/Fonz/Laverne(ABC)	17
Speedbuggy(CBS)	13
Meatballs & Spagetti(CBS)	10
Shirtales(NBC)	7
Gilligan's Planet(CBS)	7
Gary Coleman Show(NBC)	5
Fat Albert(CBS)	3

*Most of violence in Little Rascal Segments

National Children & TV Week's Prime-time Programming

To celebrate National Children and Television Week the networks present the following prime time to go along with the usual Saturday morning cartoons.

From TVGuide descriptions:

Saturday: Wizards & Warriors: Battling lightning bolts, black magic, and demon monsters, Prince rescues kidnapped Princess from evil Blackpool; T.J.Hooker(ABC): draws fire from fellow officers when he chooses not to shoot a cornered cop killer; Jane Doe(CBS movie): Suffering from amnesia due to an attempt on her life, Jane is hounded by a [illegible], "Woman without a memory, detective without a clue, and a [illegible] without a choice but to try and kill her again." Fantasy Island(ABC): [illegible] whose husband died during a fantasy puts a $1 million bounty on Ro[illegible]d.

Sunday: [illegible] Search for little girl who was kidnapped on her way home from school; [illegible] muckraking gossip columnist is blown sky high at high society benefit carnival; [illegible](NBC): Detective investigates mysterious disappearance of wealthy industrialist.

Monday: Small & Fry(CBS)(comedic violence): Tries to stop a chemical firm from polluting a pond(ad: "Can a 6-inch detective cut two hit-men down to size?); Cagney & Lacey(CBS): Car-theft ring takes policeman hostage and another policeman searching for him becomes involved in the shooting of a black youth.

Tuesday: The A-Team(NBC): Crash-lands in backwoods to battle with mountain men to save a man from being burned at the stake; Ace Crawford, Private Eye(CBS comedic violence): Tough-talking detective short on ability has confrontation with hood who's shaking down bar owner; Gun Shy(CBS): Devil-may-care gambler wins two kids in poker game with two outlaw pals; Remington Steele(NBC): Corpse bobs to surface of wine vat and keeps resurfacing in unrelated places; Hart to Hart(ABC): wedding gift of antique bed that several people try to kill for in order to steal it.

Wednesday: High Performance(ABC): rescue of TV reporter whose cover was blown after he infiltrated survivalist group stockpiling illegal weapons; Fall Guy(ABC): Tab Hunter framed for murder of gangland debt collector and rescued by Colt; Dynasty(ABC): Jeff & Kirby get cold reception returning from Reno, Blake threatens to stop Jeff from suing Alexis.

Thursday: Magnum P.I.: Pilot survives crash but Magnum discovers his survival wasn't in game plan; Magic Planet(ABC): Astronaut confronted by evil rival in romance with planet queen.

Friday Powers of Matthew Star(NBC): Classmate can see into the future, a future fraught with danger for her; Knight Rider: Michael assigned to stop Karr, an evil prototype of Kitt programmed to survive at all costs; Renegades(ABC): Team sets up sting to find out who is training prisoners to crack sophisticated safes; Gavilan: stalked by members of a Nazi faction who think he has mysterious crystal pyramid; Dallas: Holly plots to destroy JR's marriage; Tales of the Gold Monkey(ABC): Reporter covering assassination attempt against Japanese defense minister tricks Jake into flying her to Princess Koji's Island.

[From the Washingtonian, October 1981]

Go Get Some Milk and Cookies and Watch the Murders on Television

(By Daniel Schorr)

John W. Hinckley Jr. causes me to reflect, having recently turned 65, on what the media age has wrought. Hinckley's unhappy lifetime of some 26 years coincides roughly with my life in television. Whatever else made him want to shoot a President, Hinckley epitomizes the perverse effects of our violence-prone culture of entertainment.

Hinckley weaves together strands of media-stimulated fantasy, fan frenzy, and the urge to proclaim identity by starring in a televised event. His success is attested to by everything that has happened since March 30, when he managed to disrupt the regular programs listed on his copy of *TV Guide* to bring on command performances by Dan Rather, Frank Reynolds, Roger Mudd, and the other news superstars. Since November 22, 1963, these electronic special reports—the modern equivalent of the old newspaper extra—have been America's way of certifying a "historic event."

Much has been shown to Hinckley's generation to lower the threshold of resistance to violent acts. When the time came for Hinckley to act—to plug himself into this continuum of television and movie violence—the screenplay was easily written, the roles nearly preassigned. The media-conscious "public" President, Ronald Reagan, attracted the cameras, which attracted the crowds, which provided both the arena and the cover for the assailant. The network cameras routinely assigned, since the Kennedy assassination, to "the presidential watch" recorded the "actuality" and showed it in hypnotic, incessant replays. The audience tingled to the all-too-familiar "special report" emblazoned across the screen.

To nobody's surprise, the celebration of violence stirred would-be imitators. The Secret Service recorded an astonishing number of subsequent threats on the President's life. One of them came from Edward Michael Robinson, 22, who had watched the TV coverage and later told police that Hinckley had appeared to him in a dream, telling him to "bring completion to Hinckley's reality."

Psychiatrist Walter Menninger examined Sara Jane Moore, who tried to kill President Ford in 1975, and found it no coincidence that two weeks earlier a well-publicized attempt on Ford's life had been made by Squeaky Fromme.

"There is no doubt," Dr. Menninger told me, "of the effect of the broad, rapid, and intense dissemination of such an event. The scene in front of the Washington Hilton must have been indelibly coded in everybody's mind with an immediacy that does not happen with the print media. We have learned from the studies of television that people do get influenced by what they experience on television."

The broadcasting industry says it can't help it if occasionally a disturbed person tried to act out depicted violence—fictional or actual. In 1975, a Vietnam veteran in Hyattsville, Maryland, who had told his wife, "I watch television too much," began sniping at passersby in a way he had noted during an episode of S.W.A.T.—and, like the fictional sniper, was killed by a police sharpshooter.

The American Medical Association reported in 1977 that physicians were telling of cases of injury from TV imitation showing up in their offices and hospitals. One doctor treated two children who, playing Batman, had jumped off a roof. Another said a child who had set fire to a house was copying an arson incident viewed on television.

No court has yet held television legally culpable for the violence it is accused of stimulating. In Florida in 1978, fifteen-year-old Ronny Zamora was convicted—after a televised trial—of killing his elderly neighbor despite the novel plea of "involuntary subliminal television intoxication." The parents of a California girl who had been sexually assaulted in 1974 in a manner depicted three days earlier in an NBC television drama lost their suit against the network.

That's as it should be. I support the constitutional right of the broadcasting industry to depict violence, just as I support *Hustler* magazine's right to depict pornography—with distaste. As Jules Feiffer, the cartoonist and civil libertarian, has noted, one sometimes finds oneself in the position of defending people one wouldn't dine with. What troubles me, as I reflect on the case of John Hinckley, is the reluctance of television to acknowledge its contribution to fostering an American culture of violence, not only by the way it presents fantasy but by the way it conveys reality—and by the way it blurs the line between the two.

In 1974 Reg Murphy, then editor of the Atlanta Constitution (he is now publisher of the Baltimore Sun), was kidnapped. He says his abductors immediately sped to an apartment and turned on a TV set to see whether their act had made the evening news.

In 1971 prison rioters in Attica, New York, listed as a primary demand that their grievances be aired on TV.

In 1977 in Indianapolis, Anthony George Kiritsis wired a sawed-off shotgun to the neck of a mortgage company officer, led him out in front of the police and TV cameras, and yelled: "Get those goddamm cameras on! I'm a goddamn national hero!"

In 1974 in Sarasota, Florida, an anchorwoman on television station WXLT said on the air, "In keeping with Channel 40's policy of bringing you the latest in blood and guts in living color, you're going to see another first—an attempt at suicide." Whereupon she pulled a gun out of a shopping bag and shot herself fatally in the head.

These incidents—the list could go on and on—were all aspects of the phenomenon of the mass media as grand arbiter of identity, validator of existence. Descartes might say today, "I appear on television, therefore I am."

One becomes accustomed, after working a long time in the medium, to hearing strangers remark, without elaboration, "I saw you on television!" One even gets inured to being hauled over to meet somebody's relatives. It is as though the TV personality has an existence of its own. I experienced the other side of this phenomenon in 1976 when I stopped broadcasting for CBS. People asked, solicitously, if everything was right—as though, being off the air, I had ceased to be in some existential sense.

"Getting on television" has become a preoccupation of people in government politics, and industry, not to mention all manner of single-issue advocates. Candidates will fashion their campaigns around "photo opportunities." Senators will be drawn by the presence of cameras to legislative hearings they otherwise would skip.

Many people will do almost anything to get on TV. Some will even kill.

Anthony Quainton, former head of the State Department's Office for Combating Terrorism, associates the increase in casualties during hijackings and hostage-takings with the desire of terrorists to insure news-media attention. Deliberate acts of horror—like the tossing out of slain victims—are planned as media events. On the other hand, the failure of the hijacking of a Turkish plane to Bulgaria in May was at least partly due to the fact that two of the terrorists had left the plane to give a press conference.

Sometimes the aim is to hijack television itself. When the radical Baader-Meinhof gang in West Germany kidnapped a politician in 1975 as hostage for the release of five imprisoned comrades, it forced German television to show each prisoner boarding a plane and to broadcast dictated propaganda statements. "For 72 hours we lost control of our medium," a German television executive later said.

When Arab terrorists seized the Vienna headquarters of OPEC in 1975, killing three persons and taking oil ministers hostage, the terrorists' plan called for them to occupy the building until TV cameras arrived.

A central feature of the plan of the San Francisco "Symbionese Liberation Army," which kidnapped Patricia Hearst, was the exploitation of the media—forcing radio and television to play its tapes and carry its messages.

The Hanafi Muslims' hostage-taking occupation of three locations in Washington in 1976 was a classic case of media-age terrorism. The leader, Hamaas Abdul Khaalis, spent much of his time giving interviews by telephone, while his wife checked on what was being broadcast.

"These crimes are highly contagious," warns Dr. Harold Visotsky, head of the department of psychiatry at Northwestern University. "Deranged persons have a passion for keeping up with the news and imitating it."

It does not seem to matter much if they are keeping up with "the news" or with "entertainment," for more and more the distinction is thinly drawn. A real attempt on the President's life produces a rash of threats. A prime-time drama about a bomb on an airplane produces a rash of reports of bombs on airplanes.

In all of this, television claims to be innocent—a helpless eyewitness, sometimes even a hostage. It's not that simple. To begin with, television has helped blur the lines between reality and fantasy in the general consciousness.

Television news itself—obliged to coexist with its entertainment environment, seeking to present facts with the tools of fantasy—ends up with a dramatized version of life. Everything that goes into making a well-paced, smoothly edited "package" subtly changes reality into a more exciting allegory of events. The confusion is compounded by the use of "cinéma réalité" techniques in fictional dramas, and the modern forms of fact-and-fiction "docudramas" and "reenactments" of events.

It began to come home to me that audiences were blurring the distinction between reality and entertainment when I received telephone calls from several persons, during the 1973 Senate Watergate hearings that preempted soap operas, asking that the networks "cancel" a boring witness and "put back John Dean and his nice wife." Moreover, some friends of mine praised a "documentary" shown by NBC, *The Raid at Entebbe*, and had to be reminded that it was a reenactment.

The gradual erosion of the line between fact and fantasy, between news and theater, can have serious consequences. People slow to react to accidents and muggings may be experiencing the existential question of whether these things are really happening. A woman wrote columnist Abigail Van Buren of being bound and gagged by a robber who told the victim's four-year-old boy to watch television for a while before calling for help. The child looked at TV for the next three hours, ignoring his mother's desperate efforts to get his attention. Perhaps, to the child, the show was more real than his mother's muffled screams.

Having obscured the difference between fantasy and reality, television offers incentives to people who are seeking emphatic ways of getting recognition. Innocent hand-waving, as an attention-getting device, yields to demonstrations, which in turn yield to riots.

In my own experience, covering urban unrest for CBS in the 1960s, threatening rhetoric tended to overpower moderate rhetoric and be selected for the network's *Evening News* because it made "better television." I have no doubt that television helped to build up militant blacks like Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown within the black community by giving them preferred exposure. Nonviolent leaders found themselves obliged to escalate the militancy of their own rhetoric. When Martin Luther King, Jr. came to Washington in 1968 to discuss plans for the "poor people's march" that he did not live to lead, he told me he had to allude to possibilities for disruption as a way of getting media attention.

At a community meeting after the first night of rioting in the Watts area of Los Angeles in 1965, most of those who spoke appealed for calm. But a teenager who seized the microphone and called for "going after the whiteys" was featured on evening TV news programs. A moderate commented, "Look to me like he [the white man] want us to riot." Another said, "If that's the way they read it, that's the way we'll write the book."

In recent years, television news, compelled to come to terms with its own potency, has sought to enforce guidelines for coverage of group violence. Television tries to guard against being an immediate instigator of violence, but its reaction is too little and too late to overcome the cumulative consequences of a generation of depicted violence. It is like trying to control proliferation of nuclear weapons after distributing nuclear reactors over a prolonged period.

For three decades, since the time when there were 10 million TV sets in America, I have watched efforts to determine objectively the effects of televised violence while the TV industry strove to sweep the issue under the carpet.

What television hated most of all to acknowledge was that violence on TV was not incidental or accidental but a consciously fostered element in the ratings race. In 1976 David Rintels, president of the Writers Guild in Los Angeles, where most of the blood-and-guts scripts are spawned, told a congressional committee: "The networks not only approve violence on TV, they have been known to request and inspire it.

"There is so much violence on television," he said, "because the networks want it. They want it because they think they can attract viewers by it. It attracts sponsors. Affiliate stations welcome it."

A personal experience brought home to me the industry's sensitivity to the subject. In January 1969 my report for an *Evening News* telecast, summarizing the interim findings of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, was altered shortly before air time at the direction of Richard N. Salant, president of CBS News, to eliminate a comment about television. The passage cited the commission's view that while "most persons will not kill after seeing a single violent television program, * * * it is possible that many learn some of their attitudes about violence from years of TV exposure and may be likely to engage in violence." For management to override the news judgment of the "Cronkite show" was extremely rare.

Riots and assassinations would bring the issue periodically to the fore, but the research had been going on for a long time. For more than a quarter of a century social scientists have studied the effects of violence-viewing—especially on children.

At Stanford University, Professor Albert Bandura reported that children three to six years of age whose toys were taken away after they had seen films showing aggression would be more likely to pound an inflated doll in their frustration than children who had not seen such films.

A Canadian study by R. S. Walters and E. Llewellyn Thomas found that high school students who had viewed aggressive films were more likely than others to administer strong electric shocks to students making errors on an exam.

An experiment conducted in Maryland for the National Institute of Mental Health found serious fights in school more common among high school students who watched violent TV programs.

Bradley Greenberg and Joseph Dominick, studying Michigan public-school pupils, found that "higher exposure to television violence in entertainment was associated with greater approval of violence and greater willingness to use it in real life."

Drs. Dorothy and Jerome Singer of Yale University concluded from an echaustive series of interviews that the children who watched the most television were likely to act most aggressively in family situations. Although they could not produce a "smoking gun" that would influence the TV industry, they argued that they had eliminated every other factor that could account for the high correlation between aggressive behavior and viewing of "action-oriented" shows.

Dr. Leonard Berkowitz of the University of Wisconsin, in two experiments ten years apart, found that third-graders watching a great many violent programs were likely to be rated by other pupils as high in aggressive behavior and that, at nineteen, most of them were still described as "aggressive" by their peers. In fact, reported Dr. Berkowitz, the amount of television viewed at the age of nine is "one of the best predictors of whether a person will be found to be aggressive in later life."

Congress took an early interest in the question of violence in TV programs. In 1952 the House Commerce Committee held hearings on excessive sex and violence on television. Senate hearings on TV violence and juvenile delinquency, conducted by Senators Estes Kefauver of Tennessee and Thomas Dodd of Connecticut, stirred episodic public interest. The hearing transcripts make a tall stack, adding up to fifteen years of congressional alarm over television, and industry reassurance that it was addressing the problem.

The controversy over television assumed a new dimension of national concern in the wake of the urban riots and assassinations of the 1960s. In 1968, after the assassination of Robert Kennedy, President Johnson named a commission, headed by Dr. Milton Eisenhower, to inquire into the causes of violence and how it might be prevented.

Between October and December 1968, the Eisenhower Commission held hearings on television, questioning social scientists and industry executives about the extent to which the medium might be the instigator or abettor of violent acts. One commission member, Leon Jaworski, later to be the Watergate prosecutor, expressed the belief that television might have "a tremendous responsibility" for violence in America.

The television networks acknowledged no such responsibility. When Commissioner Albert E. Jenner asked whether "the depiction of violence has an effect upon the viewer," Dr. Frank Stanton, president of CBS, replied: "It may or may not have. That is the question we don't have the answer to."

Nevertheless, the commission decided to formulate an answer. After a long debate—from which Lloyd N. Cutler, the executive director disqualified himself because of his law firm's TV-industry clients—the panel declared in its final report that it was "deeply troubled by television's constant portrayal of violence . . . pandering to a public preoccupation with violence that television itself has helped to generate."

The panel's report concluded: "A constant diet of violence on TV has an adverse effect on human character and attitudes. Violence on television encourages violent forms of behavior and fosters moral and social values in daily life which are unacceptable in a civilized society. We do not suggest that television is a principal cause of violence in our society. We do suggest that it is a contributing factor."

A two-volume report of the commission's "Task Force on Mass Media and Violence" concluded that, as a short-range effect, those who see violent acts portrayed learn to perform them and may imitate them in a similar situation, and that, as a long-term effect, exposure to media violence "socializes audiences into the norms, attitudes, and values for violence."

The Eisenhower Commission's report on television had little impact—it was overshadowed in the news media by its more headline-making findings about riots, civil disobedience, and police brutality. The networks acted to reduce the violence in animated cartoons for children and killings in adult programs, and the motion-picture industry quickly compensated by increasing the incidence and vividness of its bloodletting.

However, Congress, on the initiative of Rhode Island Senator John O. Pastore, a long-standing critic of television, moved to mandate a completely new investigation, calling on the US Surgeon General for a report on TV and violence that would, in effect, parallel the report associating cigarette smoking with cancer.

Worried about what might emerge from such a study, the television industry lobbied with President Nixon's Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, Robert Finch, to influence the organization and conduct of the investigation. It successfully opposed seven candidates for appointment to the committee, including the best-known researchers in the field. The Surgeon General's Committee on Television and Social Behavior, as constituted, comprised five experts affiliated with the broadcasting industry, and four behavioral scientists innocent of mass-media background.

Three years and $1.8 million later, the committee produced its report, "Television and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence," supported by five volumes of technical studies. The full report, read by few, provided telling data on the role of TV violence as instigator of aggression in young people, but the nineteen-page summary that would determine the public perception emerged opaque and ambiguous, after an intense struggle within the committee.

"Under the circumstances," it said, watching violent fare on television could cause a young person to act aggressively, but "children imitate and learn from everything they see." The research studies, it said, indicated "a modest association between viewing of television and violence among at least some children," but "television is only one of the many factors which in time may precede aggressive behavior."

The summary danced around the crucial issue of causation: "Several findings of the survey studied can be cited to sustain the hypthesis that viewing of violent television has a causal relation to aggressive behavior, though neither individually nor collectively are the findings conclusive."

The ambiguity was mirrored in the pages of the New York Times. A front-page story on January 12, 1972, based on a leak, was headlined TV Violence Held Unharmful to Youth. But when the report was officially released a week later, the Times story said, "The study shows for the first time a causal connection between violence shown on television and subsequent behavior by children."

"It is clear to me," said Surgeon General Jesse Steinfeld, presenting his report at a hearing conducted by Senator Pastore, "that the causal relationship between televised violence and antisocial behavior is sufficient to warrant appropriate and remedial action."

There was no significant remedial action. As the decade of urban violence and assassinations ebbed, the issue of television violence faded, to come back another day. And another day would bring another report.

Even before the latest incidents of violence, a new inquiry had started. Dr. Eli A. Rubinstein had first come to the Surgeon General's committee as a vice chairman fresh from the National Institute of Mental Health. His experience with the investigation led him to make the study of the mass media his career.

In 1980, Dr. Rubinstein, now professor of psychology at the University of North Carolina, persuaded President Carter's Surgeon General, Dr. Julius Richmond, to assemble an ad hoc committee to prepare an updated version of the 1972 Surgeon General's report on its tenth anniversary. Two volumes of new technical studies have already been compiled. The conclusions are yet to be written, but there is no doubt that they will reinforce and expand the original timidly stated findings.

One thing the new report will do, Dr. Rubinstein said, is to lay to rest the theory that depicted violence can actually decrease aggression by serving as a "cathartic"—the cleansing and purging of an audience's emotions that Aristotle held to be the highest test of tragedy. Advanced by some behavorial scientists studying television, the theory was examined during the 1972 study for the Surgeon General, which concluded that there was "no evidence to support a catharsis interpretation." The updated report, citing new empirical studies, will make that point more strongly.

"A tremendous amount of work has been done over the past ten years, and the volume of literature has probably tripled," Dr. Rubinstein says. "If any mistake was made ten years ago, it was to be too qualified about the relationship between TV violence and aggressiveness. We have a lot of new evidence about causality, and about what constitutes causality. We know much more about how television produces aggressive behavior. We know more about how fantasy can crowd out reality, and the specific influences of television on disturbed minds.

"The fundamental scientific evidence indicates that television affects the viewer in more ways than we realized initially. You will recall that the original smoking-and-health study was limited to the lungs, and later it was learned how smoking affects the heart and other parts of the body. In the same way, we now know that the original emphasis on TV violence was too narrow. Television affects not only a predisposition towards violence, but the whole range of social and psychological development of the younger generation."

The new Surgeon General's report, scheduled for release by the Reagan administration in 1982, is likely to be challenged by the TV industry with all the vigor displayed by the tobacco lobby when opposing the report on smoking and cancer. Inevitably, it will be read for clues to violent behavior of people like John Hinckley.

What made Hinckley different, what made him shoot the President are ultimately matters for psychiatry and the law to determine. But the "media factor" played a part.

As Hinckley withdrew from school and family life, he retreated progressively into a waiting world of violent fantasy, spending more and more time alone with television—an exciting companion that made no demands on him.

But television was not the only part of the media working to merge fat and fantasy for Hinckley. He was strongly influenced by *Taxi Driver*, a motion picture about a psychopath who found the answer to his anxieties through his obsession with violence. Like the taxi driver, Hinckley oscillated between wanting to kill a public figure to impress the object of his affections, and wanting to "rescue" her from "evil" surroundings. Paul Schrader, author of the screenplay, tells me that the moment he heard that President Reagan had been shot, his reaction was, "There goes another taxi driver!"

Hinckley was also affected by fan frenzy, a special manifestation of the media culture. It focused not only on Jodie Foster, the female lead in *Taxi Driver*, but also on former Beatle John Lennon, whose music he played on the guitar. Last New Year's Eve, after Lennon's murder, Hinckley taped a monologue, in his motel room near Denver, in which he mourned: "John and Jodie, and now one of 'em's dead.

"Sometimes," he said, "I think I'd rather just see here not . . . not on earth than being with other guys. I wouldn't wanna stay on earth without her on earth. It'd have to be some kind of pact between Jodie and me."

And the influences working on Hinckley extended beyond the visual media. The idea of a suicide pact was apparently drawn from *The Fan*, a novel by Bob Randall that Hinckley had borrowed—along with books about the Kennedy family and Gordon Liddy's *Will*—from a public library in Evergreen, Colorado. In the book, the paranoid fan of a Broadway star, feeling rejected in his advances by mail, kills the actress and himself as she opens in a theater production. Early last March, as Foster was preparing to open in a New Haven stock-company play, Hinckley slipped a letter under her door saying, "After tonight John Lennon and I will have a lot in common."

The plan that finally congealed this welter of media-drawn inspirations and impelled the young misfit to action was a presidential assassination. Before setting out, he—like the fictional fan—left behind a letter to be read posthumously. It was to tell Foster that he intended, through "this historical deed, to gain your respect and love."

As though to document his place in the media hall of fame, he dated and timed the letter and left behind, in his room in the Park Central Hotel, tapes of his guitar playing, his New Year's Eve soliloquy, and a telephone conversation with Foster.

A failure at most things, Hinckley was a spectacular media success who had survived to enjoy his celebrityhood—a lesson that won't be lost on other driven persons.

No one could doubt his importance or challenge his identity as the news cameras clustered around the federal courthouse when he arrived for his arraignment in a presidential-size limousine heralded by police sirens.

In the great made-for-TV drama, participants more "normal" than Hinckley seemed also to play assigned roles, as if caught up in some ineluctable screenplay. The TV anchors were reviewed for smoothness, composure, and factual accuracy under stress. Secretary of State Haig, making a gripping appearance in the White House press room, was panned for gasping and for misreading his lines. President Reagan, with considerable support from White House aides and from the smoothly reassuring Dr. Dennis O'Leary, himself an instant hit, won plaudits for a flawless performance as the wisecracking, death-defying leader of the Free World.

The effect was to reinforce the pervasive sense of unreality engendered by a generation of television shoot-outs—the impression that being shot doesn't really hurt, that everything will turn out all right in time for the final commercial.

One can understand the desire to assure the world that the government is functioning. But Dr. David Hamburg, the psychiatrist and former president of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences, believes it harmful to imply that a shooting can be without apparent physical consequence.

"Getting shot is not like falling off a horse," Dr. Hamburg says. "To sanitize an act of violence is a disservice. It is unwise to minimize the fact that a President can get hurt and that he can bleed."

One more contribution had been made to obscuring the pain and reality of violence, to blurring the critical distinction between fiction and fact. The media President was, in his way, as much a product of the age of unreality as was John Hinckley, the media freak. In the media age, reality had been the first casualty.

HOW MANY MURDERS CAN YOUR KIDS WATCH?

The National Coalition on Television Violence says these are the most violent programs on national television. The data was compiled between February and May of 1981, and the scores for each program are in violent acts per hour.

	Network	Acts of violence
Prime-time shows:		
Walking Tall	NBC	25
Vegas	ABC	18
Lobo	NBC	18
Greatest American Hero	ABC	18
Incredible Hulk	CBS	14
Magnum P.I.	CBS	14
Hart to Hart	ABC	14
Dukes of Hazzard	CBS	14
B.J. & the Bear	NBC	14
Fantasy Island	ABC	11
Enos	CBS	11
Saturday morning cartoons:		
Thundarr the Barbarian	ABC	64
Daffy Duck	NBC	52
Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner	CBS	51
Superfriends	ABC	38
Richie Rich/Scooby Doo	ABC	30
Plasticman, Baby Plas	ABC	28
Heathcliff & Dingbat	ABC	28
Fonz	ABC	28
Tom & Jerry	CBS	27
Popeye	CBS	26
Johnny Quest	NBC	25
Drak Pak	CBS	23
Batman	NBC	19
Godzilla/Hong Kong Phooey	NBC	18
Flintstones	NBC	13
Tarzan/Lone Ranger	CBS	13

[National Institute of Mental Health, Vol. 1: Summary Report]

TELEVISION AND BEHAVIOR: TEN YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EIGHTIES

CHAPTER I.—TEN YEARS OF SCIENTIFIC PROGRESS: AN OVERVIEW

THE SURGEON GENERAL'S SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT—1972

Among the great inventions in the electronic age, television is one of the most beguiling. A sound-and-light show appealing to the prepotent senses of vision and hearing, it draws attention like a magnet. Infants as young as 6 months gaze at it; little children sit in front of it for hours at a time; and millions of elderly, sick, and institutionalized people keep contact with the outside world mainly through television. An integral part of everyday life, it helps to determine how people spend their time, what they learn, what they think and talk about; it influences their opinions and helps shape their behavior. Few other inventions have so completely enveloped an entire population. More Americans have television than have refrigerators or indoor plumbing.

It is no wonder, then, that students of human behavior have been attracted to television as a field of research, as a vast arena for the study of behavior in today's technological world. It is no less wonder that the American public is concerned about the effects of television on their lives and the lives of their children. Some people think it has a malignant influence; others praise it as a boon to society. Wanting to know about the effects of television, the public has turned to the scientific community for answers.

Spurred on by both curiosity and a need to find answers to practical questions, scientists have been busy during the past decade at many kinds of television research. Such research did not arise suddenly. Investigations into the effects of television began in the late 1940s, almost as soon as television began to appear in American homes, continued at a relatively slow pace in the 1950s, and accelerated in the 1960s.

In 1969, the increase in research on television began with a request by Senator John G. Pastore to the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. As Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Communications of the Senate Commerce Committee, Senator Pastore wrote,"I am exceedingly troubled by the lack of any definitive information which would help resolve the question of whether there is a casual connection between televised crime and violence and antisocial behavior by individuals, especially children. . . ." The Senator asked the Secretary to direct the Surgeon General of the U.S. Public Health Service to appoint a committee to "conduct a study to establish scientifically what effects these kinds of programs have on children."

The Department swung rapidly into action. The Surgeon General directed the National Institute of Mental Health to take responsibility for the committee and to provide necessary staff. The Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior was appointed, and one million dollars were provided for new research. Scientists throughout the country submitted proposals; the most promising proposals received approval; and their authors were funded to conduct the research. The studies were completed within 2 years, unusual speed for the behavioral sciences. In December 1971, the committee sent its report to the Surgeon General. The report, entitled Televsion and Growing Up: The Impact of Televised Violence, summarized the state of knowledge at that time. It was accompanied by five technical volumes of reports in which the contributing scientists described their studies in detail.

The report confirmed the "pervasiveness of television in the United States," stating that almost everyone watched some television programs and that many people watched for many hours a day. The report pointed out that little was known about the reasons people view so much television or choose particular programs. The report also confirmed that there was a great deal of violence on television. On entertainment television during 1967 and 1968, there were about eight violent incidents per hour.

The report's major conclusion, often quoted, was: "Thus, there is a convergence of the fairly substantial experimental evidence for a short-run causation of aggression among some children by viewing violence on the screen and much less certain evidence from field studies that extensive violence viewing precedes some long-run manifestations of aggressive behavior. The convergence of the two types of evidence constitute some preliminary indication of a casual relationship, but a good deal of research remains to be done before one can have confidence in these conclusions."

The committee itself wrote that these tentative and limited conclusions were not entirely satisfactory but that they did represent much more knowledge than was available when the committee began its work.

TEN YEARS LATER

During the 1970s, much of the necessary research was done, and—to anticipate findings that will be described later—it can be said that the evidence for a casual relationship between excessive violence viewing and aggression goes well beyond the preliminary level. Scientists in this decade have also broadened the research. They have been trying to find the many interrelated and intricate factors that operate in television programing and viewing—who watches television and why, what children see and hear on television, what people learn from television and how they learn it. Among other topics, they analyze television's effects on social life and values.

As a result of the Surgeon General's committee effort, a new generation of scientists was spawned. Some of the scientists who undertook research projects in the late 1960s are still working the field. Many of the younger people brought into the projects as assistants and associates developed a continuing interest and are now contributing their talents and efforts to television research. They include investigators from all the behavioral sciences, notably psychology, psychiatry, and sociology, as well as from public health and communications. They do their work in many settings, including universities and the television industry itself. Much of the research is supported by the government and private foundations, but many of the smaller projects have no major outside funding. During the past decade, at almost all conventions of behavioral scientists, there have been sessions on television research which has become an established specialty.

Although the number of scientists doing television research has increased, it is still small compared to the magnitude of the research problems. Many more investigators from all fields are needed if research is to find answers to the questions concerned citizens ask.

Because scientists from many fields have been at work, the studies have taken different approaches. Some, for example, concentrate on analyses of program content, others observe children before and after they have looked at violent programs, and still others observe children after they have looked at benign and prosocial programs. Many of the projects are done in the laboratory under strict experimental conditions, others are naturalistic field studies and observations. These two approaches complement one another. The laboratory studies tell whether or not something can happen, the possibility of occurrence. The field studies tell how commonly something does happen, the likelihood of occurrence. When both kinds of studies point in the same direction, their conclusions are mutually reinforcing.

The amount of television research increased significantly during the 1970s. This increase is documented in a bibliography published in 1980; the bibliography covers articles, books, and other materials in the field of research on television and youth published, primarily in English, between 1946 and 1980.[1] Up to 1970 there were about 300 titles, and from 1970 through 1980 there were another 2,500, of which more than two-thirds were published in 1975 or later. Put another way, 90 percent of all the publications appeared in the last 10 years. No one knows whether this acceleration will continue at such a rate, but television is as much a part of present-day human existence that the amount of research will undoubtedly increase and delve even more into all facets of the relationship between television and human behavior.

Much of the research on effects of television has been concerned with its impact on children. It is easier to gather data on young people, as most of them are in schools or other settings that make them accessible to the investigators. Also, it is more important to learn about television's influence on the growing child. It's essential to know what the many hours a day spent watching television are doing to them at a time when they are developing and learning about the world and the people around them. Children are an audience qualitatively different from adults, and they may be an audience more vulnerable to television's messages. It may also be significant that there is now a generation of young adults who have grown up with television and whose children are now second-generation television viewers. The effects on them probably are not the same as on previous generations who were adults when they first became acquainted with television.

THE TELEVISION AUDIENCE

The Surgeon General's committee asked who watches television, and its report replied, "almost everyone." That was true in the late 1960s and it is still true in the early 1980s. Some people watch occasionally, for special events or at certain times, but many Americans watch television everyday. Their viewing times range from an hour or two to many hours daily, and some even keep the set on all day long. One survey showed that for large numbers of people television ranks third among all activities (after sleep and work) in the number of hours devoted to it.

One could go on citing figures about the pervasiveness and ubiquity of television. It should be remembered, however, that these figures are estimates. If TV Guide states that 85 million people watched Roots, it does not mean that the roofs were snatched off all the houses and apartments in the United States and the people in front of television sets counted one by one. The figures are projections from small samples and are subject to all the errors—and the scientific accuracy—found in such projections.

Most of the audience figure estimates come from surveys. Surveys conducted by telephone are much in use now, although mail and door-to-door surveys are still used occasionally. Another technique is exemplified by the famous Nielsen ratings which derive from television use in about 1,200 homes where the set is hooked up to a computer indicating when the set is on and which channel it is turned to. Other procedures merely ask people if they look at television, how often, which programs, and so on. This kind of questioning is sometimes done by interviewers and sometimes through written questionnaires. People have also been asked to keep television logs or diaries of their viewing. In a few instances, ordinarily in conjunction with other studies, direct observations of families or other groups, such as children or institutionalized persons, have been made by visitors to the home or institution.

On the basis of these surveys and observations, quite a bit is known about who looks at television. Because many different methods have been used and compared, this information, as a whole, is probably accurate and reliable.

For research purposes, the audience is often categorized in terms of amount of viewing. Some scientists use simple terms like "heavy" and "light" viewers or "high" and "low" amount of viewing. In some situations, a person who looks at television more than 4 hours a day is called a "heavy" viewer. A "light" viewer might be defined as a person who views about an hour a day or less. Where to draw additional lines in between is sometimes a topic of scientific controversy. There are, of course, the "constant" viewers who watch television almost all their waking hours, and there are some confirmed "nonviewers." The definitions vary, depending on who is doing the research and on the purpose of the research.

Surveys confirm what most people already suspect—television appeals to all ages, though not equally. Babies look at it for rather brief intervals and, as they grow older, tend to look at it more and more. By age 2 or 3, some children spend large amounts of time before the set and apparently have some understanding of what is going on. The amount of viewing continues at a relatively high level, then drops off somewhat when children reach their teens. In young adulthood it increases again, especially for parents with young children. Viewing time tends to drop in the busy years of middle age, but later in life television again becomes a major attraction and may be watched for many hours a day. It is sometimes the principal recreation for elderly people.

Amount of viewing seems to vary with other characteristics of people. Minority groups tend to watch more than others, on the average, and women more than men. Some surveys show that people in lower socioeconomic groups view somewhat more than those in the middle class. People who watch a lot of television tend to be less educated than those who do not watch as much, yet among college students television is a favorite pastime. People in hospitals, prisons, and other institutions often look at television when they get the chance.

It appears that, although almost everyone watches television, those who do not have much else to do watch it most often. Many people, for example the elderly and the unemployed, use television to fill time, to do something instead of nothing. Some researchers have concluded that these are people who do not choose to watch specific programs; they are not really selective in what they look at. They watch by the clock, turning on the set at free times, no matter what is being shown. Television is a ritualized or habitual activity.

In general, the surveys indicate that the television audience has not changed appreciably during the past 10 years. Americans' viewing habits seem to have been established early in the history of television.

DOING RESEARCH ON TELEVISION AND BEHAVIOR

Like all scientists, behavioral scientists who study television, draw their conclusions from evidence they have gathered and organized to answer specific questions. The kind of evidence they collect depends on the aspect of television and behavior they are studying and on which stage in a rather long process they are concerned with. Some simple distinctions may help clarify the complexity of the overall process, which in turn explains why each researcher tries to simplify the problem by limiting a study to a small portion of the total process.

The heart of the process includes a television set showing a particular program and a person sitting in front of it watching and listening to the program. Supposedly, the researcher then tries to study the effect of the program on this viewer. But the effects of television cannot be understood in such simple terms. Because the program on television is sometimes selected by the viewer the researcher must also consider the role of the viewer in any possible causal relationships. Moreover, the typical audience often consists of a number of persons who must somehow agree on the program they will watch. They interact with one another about the program and about other things as well. All these social relationships in the immediate viewing situation have been called the "social context" of viewing and must be taken into account. The researcher may also want to look beyond the television presentation and its audience in the immediate social context to the longer term behavioral outcomes. Television's interrelations with the viewer's psychological processes may also be a focus of inquiry. In any case, the context in which behavior occurs is important.

Television presentations themselves became a prime target of research almost since television began. Virtually any topic on television which is suspected of having behavioral effects is likely to be examined. For example, there have been content analyses of the incidence of violent portrayals, depictions of minorities, prosocial acts, families, sexual references, people in various professions, and so forth. In many of these areas, research has not progressed beyond the analyses of the content. There are good reasons for this limitation; some of the suspected effects are very difficult to measure satisfactorily as, for example, the impact of sexually oriented programs. But in other areas, the research community has moved well along in examining the effects of television's content on the viewer.

Two different approaches have been followed in the study of television's influence on the behavior of the viewing audience. One group of researchers, grounded mostly in laboratory psychology, is conducting experimental studies in which an audience is temporarily brought together to view programs selected for research purposes. This approach leads to strong conclusions about the immediate impact on behavior that the researcher subsequently observes. As a rule, social context is eliminated from consideration by holding it constant within the experimental session so that it does not affect the results. A second group of researchers approached the study of television's uses and effects in natural field settings. Field studies attempt to take social context factors into account by measuring them and making their interactions with the television experience part of what is studied. This approach usually takes the form of field surveys, which produce evidence of correlation between various factors but which are not scientifically as satisfactory as the controlled experiment in trying to isolate the specific effect of any single factor.

Two intermediate approaches have occasionally been used by researchers who hope to couple some of the precision of the experimental study with the greater generalizability and breadth of the field study. One is the field experiment, such as, systematically exposing audiences to different television programs while they remain in their normal viewing situations at home. The other is the panel study in which the same individuals are interviewed, tested, or otherwise observed over time. The panel study examines natural variation over time (rather than at a specific time, as in the field survey) on the assumption that changes occur both in the person's exposure to television presentations and in a pattern of behavior that might be affected by those presentations.

Field experiments and panel studies are relatively rare in research on television and behavior. They tend to arouse controversy among scientists; there are those who prefer the greater certainty of cause-effect evidence provided by the laboratory experiment and those who seek greater generality in field research. Field experiments are practicable on only a narrow range of topics, and often the experimental procedures seem to effect more change in the person's life than just that which the person is shown on television. Panel studies run the risk of "contamination" of the person who is repeatedly interviewed on the same topic. Because the subjects in the research are interviewed or tested repeatedly, they may not represent the larger population that has not been asked the same questions.

Disagreement among researchers is often the product of disagreement about the kind of evidence that is required to draw a conclusion. Such evidence in turn grows out of the aspect of the overall process that they are attempting to study and the specific type of television presentation or behavior that is at stake. Some students of behavioral effects, for example, may find the research detailing various imbalances—overrepresentation or underrepresentation—in the demographic makeup of the total cast of characters on television to be of little import. They say that, because there is no evidence that there are socially deleterious behavioral outcomes associated with these television portrayals, the portrayals and imbalances can be shrugged off. On the other hand, some observers, including those in one of the offended demographic groups—minorities, women, the elderly, the disabled, and so on—may see the imbalances in content as sufficient grounds for action and reform, regardless of the demonstrability of the effects.

One task of developing a theory is to tie together the many areas of content analysis with the rather fewer areas where learning and other effects have been demonstrated experimentally or tested for their generality in field studies. For example, can a laboratory finding that young people imitate aggressive acts they have seen on television be extended either to social behavior in the real world or to the unmeasured impact on behavior of televised presentations of, say, prostitution or bigotry? As the total scope of research has broadened, some researchers have been willing to accept these generalizations.

While the research on television and behavior is by no means complete, it is expanding at an accelerating pace. New applications and versions of research methods are being used, and scientists can now draw conclusions more confidently than they could from the much more limited research of 10 years ago.

HIGHLIGHTS OF TEN YEARS OF RESEARCH

Television's health-promoting possibilities

In its programs, television contains many messages about health, messages that may be important to promotion of health and prevention of illness. Television seems to be doing a rather poor job of helping its audience to attain better health or better understanding of health practices. This is, of course, not a goal of commercial television; nevertheless, incidental learning from television stories and portrayals may be contributing to lifestyles and habits that are not conducive to good health. Protrayal of mental illness on television is not frequent, but when it does appear, it is related to both violence and victimization; compared with "normal" characters, twice as many mentally ill characters on television are violent or are the victims of others' violence. Even though very few characters on television are ill, many more doctors are evident than are in real life. Much of television's content seems to foster poor nutrition, especially in commercials for sweets and snack foods. Children who watch a lot of television have poorer nutritional habits than children who do not watch as much. Alcohol consumption is common; it is condoned and is presented as a part of the social milieu. When people drive cars, which occurs often on television, they almost never wear seat belts. Correlational studies suggest that people's attitudes are influenced by these portrayals. One study, for example, indicated that television ranked second to physicians and dentists as a source of health information.

There has been almost no research on people in institutions, even though it is known that they often watch television. One study in a psychiatric setting found that staff believed television had a beneficial effect on patients, especially the chronic and elderly. Increased use of television for therapeutic purpose should be considered; for example, films and videotape have been used successfully to help people learn to cope with fears and phobias. An experimental study of emotionally disturbed children reported that, for some of the children, prosocial programs increased their altruistic behavior and decreased their aggressive behavior. More research is needed to explore the therapeutic potential of television.

With the pervasiveness of television viewing, it can be assumed that campaigns to promote better health would be effective. There have been campaigns on community mental health, against drug abuse and smoking, for seat-belt wearing, for dental health, and against cancer, venereal disease, and alcoholism. An example of a successful campaign to reduce risk of cardiovascular disease in California had programs in both English and Spanish and face-to-face instruction, in addition to the television messages, for some of the groups. After 2 years, communities exposed to the campaign, even without the personal instruction, had significantly reduced the likelihood of heart attack and stroke, while in a "control" community where there was no campaign risk levels remained high. Carefully planned and evaluated campaigns built on an understanding of the ways in which messages are conveyed and incorporated into people's lives hold great promise.

Cognitive and emotional functioning

Research on cognitive processes has asked such questions as: What are the factors involved in paying attention to television? What is remembered? How much is understood? The research shows that duration of paying attention is directly related to age. Infants watch sporadically; little children gradually pay more attention visually until, at about age 4, they look at television about 55 percent of the time, even when there are many other distractions in the room. Auditory cues are very important in attracting and holding attention. Up to the second and third grades, children cannot report much of what they see and hear on television, but they probably remember more than they can report, and memory improves with growing up. Young children remember specific scenes better than relationships, and they often do not understand plot or narrative. Making inferences and differentiating between central and peripheral content are difficult for young children, but these skills also improve with age. The changes may be partly developmental and partly the result of experience with television.

The "medium as the message" came to be studied again in the 1970s. Much of what children, and others, see on television is not only the content. They learn the meaning of television's forms and codes—its camera techniques, sound effects, and organization of programs. Some of the effects of television can be traced to its forms, such as fast or slow action, loud or soft music, camera angles, and so on. Some researchers suggest that fast action, loud music, and stimulating camera tricks may account for changes in behavior following televised violence.

Although television producers and viewers alike agree that television can arouse the emotions, there has been very little research on television's effects on emotional development and functioning. It is known that some people have strong emotional attachments to television characters and personalities and that children usually prefer characters most like themselves. Research on television and the emotions should be given a top priority.

Violence and aggression

The report of the Surgeon General's committee states that there was a high level of violence on television in the 1960s. Although in the 1970s there was considerable controversy over definitions and measurement of violence, the amount of violence has not decreased. Violence on television seems to be cyclical, up a little one year, down a little the next, but the percentage of programs containing violence has remained essentially the same over the past decade.

Senator Pastore's question can be asked again: What is the effect of all this violence? After 10 more years of research, the consensus among most of the research community is that violence on television does lead to aggressive behavior behavior by children and teenagers who watch the programs. This conclusion is based on laboratory experiments and on field studies. Not all children become aggressive, of course, but the correlations between violence and aggression are positive. In magnitude, television violence is as strongly correlated with aggressive behavior as any other behavioral variable that has been measured. The research question has moved from asking whether or not there is an effect to seeking explanations for the effect.

According to observational learning theory, when children observe television characters who behave violently, they learn to be violent or aggressive themselves. Observational learning from television has been demonstrated many times under strict laboratory conditions, and there is now research on when and how it occurs in real life. Television is also said to mold children's attitudes which later may be translated into behavior. Children who watch a lot of violence on television may come to accept violence as normal behavior.

Although a causal link between televised violence and aggressive behavior now seems obvious, a recent panel study by researchers at the National Broadcasting Company found no evidence for a long-term enduring relation between viewing violent television programs and aggressive behavior. Others doing television research will no doubt examine this new study to try to learn why it does not agree with many other findings.

Imaginative play and prosocial behavior

Since children spend many hours watching the fantasy world of television it can be asked whether television enriches their imaginative capacities and whether it leads to a distortion of reality. Evidence thus far is that television does not provide material for imaginative play and that watching violent programs and cartoons is tied to aggressive behavior and to less imaginative play. Most young children do not know the difference between reality and fantasy on television, and of course, they do not understand how television works or how the characters appear on the screen. Television, however can be used to enhance children's imaginative play if an adult watches with the child and interprets what is happening.

During the past 10 years research on television's influence on prosocial behavior has burgeoned. As a result evidence is persuasive—children can learn to be altruistic, friendly and self-controlled by looking at television programs depicting such behavior patterns. It appears that they also learn to be less aggressive.

Socialization and conceptions of social reality

Most studies on socialization have been in the form of content analyses concerned with sex, race, occupation, age and consumer roles. There are more men than women on entertainment television, and the men on the average are older. The men are mostly strong and manly, the women usually passive and feminine. Both, according to some analysts are stereotyped but the women are even more stereotyped than the men. Lately there has been more sexual reference, more innuendo, and more seductive actions and dress. Both parents and behavioral scientists consider television to be an important sex educator not only in depictions specifically related to sex but in the relationships between men and women throughout all programs.

For a while, after organized protest removed degrading stereotyped portrayals from the air, there were almost no blacks to be seen on television. About 12 years ago, they emerged again, and now about 10 percent of television characters are black. There are not many Hispanics, Native Americans or Asian Americans.

Television characters usually have higher status jobs than average people in real life. A large proportion of them are professionals or managers, and relatively few are blue-collar workers.

The elderly are underrepresented on television, and, as with the younger adults, there are more old men than old women.

Research shows that consumer roles are learned from television. Children are taught to be avid consumers; they watch the commercials—they ask their parents to buy the products, and they use or consume the products. Not much research has been done with teenagers, but they seem to be more skeptical about advertisements.

In general, researchers seem to concur that television has become a major socializing agent of American children.

In addition to socialization, television influences how people think about the world around them or what is sometimes called their conceptions of "social reality." Studies have been carried out on the amount of fear and mistrust of other people, and on the prevalence of violence, sexism, family values, racial attitudes, illness in the population, criminal justice, and affluence. On the whole, it seems that television leads its viewers to have television-influenced attitudes. The studies on prevalence of violence and mistrust have consistent results: People who are heavy viewers of television are more apt to think the world is violent than are light viewers. They also trust other people less and believe that the world is a "mean and scary" place.

The family and interpersonal relations

There are many television families—about 50 families can be seen weekly—and most of them resemble what people like to think of as the typical American family. The husbands tend to be companions to their wives and friends to their children; many of the wives stay home and take care of the house and children. Recently, however, on entertainment television there have been more divorces, more single-parent families, and more unmarried couples living together. In black families, there are more single parents and more conflict than in white families. The actual effects of these portrayals on family life have been the subject of practically no research.

Television, of course, takes place in the context of social relations, mainly in the family. Parents do not seem to restrict the amount of time their children spend in front of the television set, nor do they usually prevent them from looking at certain programs. They seldom discuss programs with their children except perhaps to make a few favorable comments now and then. Many families look at television together, which brings up the question of who decides what to look at. Usually the most powerful member of the family decides—father first, then mother, then older children. But, surprisingly often, parents defer to the wishes of their young children.

Television in American society

Television seems to have brought about changes in society and its institutions. Television's effects on laws and norms have been the subject of discussion, but no firm conclusions have been reached. Television, according to some observers, reinforces the status quo and contributes to a homogenization of society and a promotion of middle-class values, Television's ubiquity in bringing events—especially violent and spectacular events—throughout the world to millions of people may mean that television itself is a significant factor in determining the events. Television broadcasts of religious services bring religion to those who cannot get out, but they also may reduce attendance at churches and thus, opportunities for social interactions. Television has certainly changed leisure time activities. For many people leisure time means just about the same as television time; their off-duty hours are spent mainly in front of the television set. Many of these effects of television, however, are still speculative and need further research to provide more accurate and reliable information.

Education and learning about television

Parents, teachers, and others blame television for low grades and low scores on scholastic aptitude tests, but causal relationships are complex, as in television and violence, and they need careful analysis. Among adults, television viewing and education are inversely related: the less schooling, the more television viewing. Although children with low IQs watch television more than others, it is not known if heavy viewing lowers IQ scores or if those with low IQ choose to watch more television. There have been no experimental studies on these questions. Research on television and educational achievement has mixed findings. Some studies found higher achievement with more television viewing, while others found lower, and still others found no relation. There seems to be a difference at different ages. At the lower grades, children who watch a moderate amount of television get higher reading scores than those who watch either a great deal or very little. But at the high school level (a time when heavy viewing tends to be less common), reading scores are inversely related to amount of viewing, with the better readers watching less television.

In terms of educational aspiration, it appears that heavy viewers want high status jobs but do not intend to spend many years in school. For girls, there is even more potential for conflict between aspirations and plans; the girls who are heavy viewers usually want to get married, have children, and stay at home to take care of them, but at the same time they plan to remain in school and to have exciting careers.

Finally, one of the most significant developments of the decade is the rise of interest in television literacy, critical viewing skills, and intervention procedures. "Television literacy" is a way to counteract the possible deleterious effects of television and also to enhance its many benefits. Several curricula and television teaching guides have been prepared, containing lessons on all facets of television technology and programing—camera techniques, format, narratives, commercials, differences between reality and fantasy, television's effect on one's life and so on. Use of these educational and intervention procedures has demonstrated that parents, children, and teachers can achieve much greater understanding of television and its effects, but whether this understanding changes their social behavior is not yet known.

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